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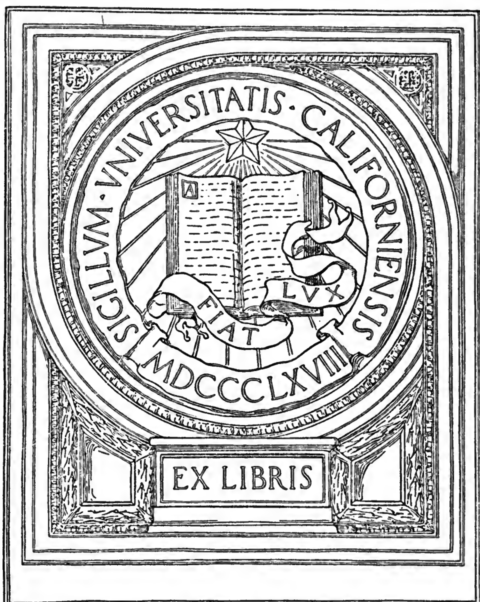

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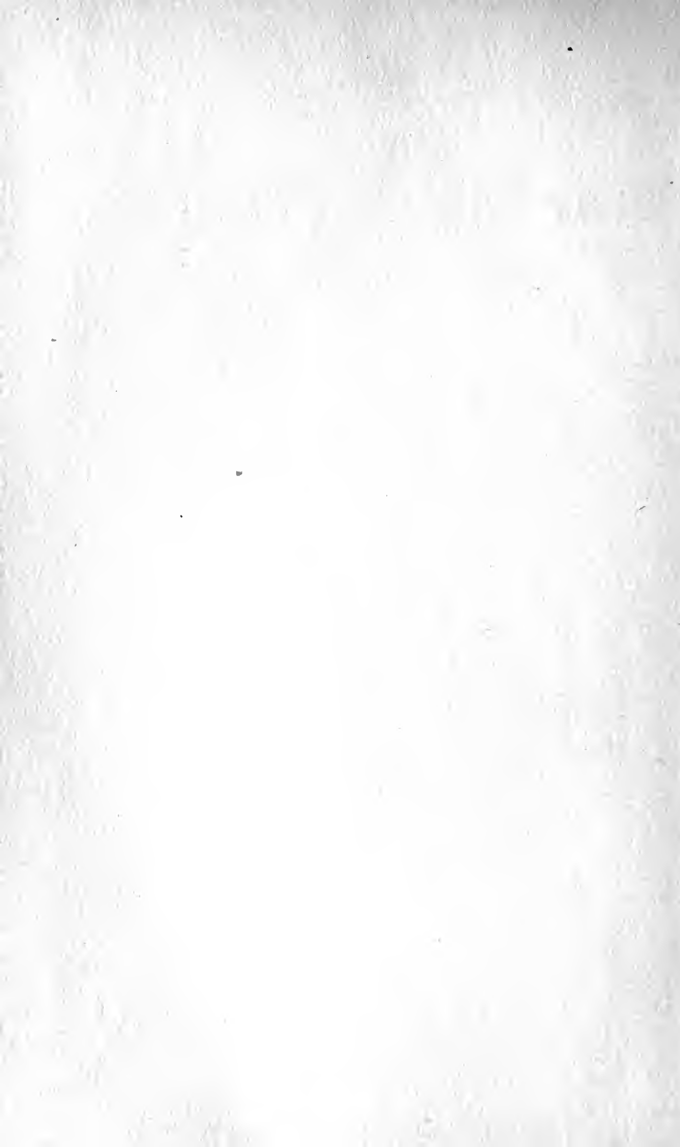

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SCOTT, FORESMAN AND COMPANY
CHICAGO ATLANTA NEW YORK

The Lake English Classics

REVISED EDITION WITH HELPS TO STUDY

SHAKSPERE'S

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

EDITED FOR SCHOOL USE

BY

WILLIAM ALLAN NEILSON

PRESIDENT SMITH COLLEGE

SCOTT, FORESMAN AND COMPANY

CHICAGO ATLANTA NEW YORK

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PREFACE

The aim in the volumes of this series is to present a satisfactory text of each play, modernized in spelling and punctuation, with as full an equipment of explanation and comment as is necessary for thorough intelligibility. The first section of the introduction is intended to give the student an idea of the place of the play in the history of the English drama in general, and of Shakspere's development in particular.

The text of the present edition has been based on the earlier of the two quartos of 1600, with occasional readings from later editions. Special pains have been taken, since this play is so largely spectacular, to make clear which of the stage-directions are taken from contemporary editions and which are the conjectures of modern editors, the latter being throughout enclosed in square brackets. A slight change from customary usage in the name of one of the characters may be noted. From an examination of the original editions it seems clear that Puck is not intended by the author to be the proper name of Robin Goodfellow, but a descriptive appellation, like Clown or Constable, though, as in these instances, it occurs at times in stage-directions and speech-tags instead of the proper name. "Robin Goodfellow" has accordingly been uniformly used in the directions, bracketed

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when this involved a departure from the quarto reading.

Some plays, as has been pointed out in previous volumes, afford a special opportunity for the discussion of plot and others of character. The present comedy affords the teacher an uncommon opening to exhibit Shakspere's power of creating a distinctive atmosphere, and the exuberance of his poetic imagination. The attention of the student may well be drawn to the apparent incongruity of the different groups constituting the *dramatis personæ:* the courtly dignity of Theseus and his circle, the romantic abandon of the lovers, the homeliness of speech and manner of Bottom and his mates, the immaterial grace of the fairies. Thinking of these groups separately, we seem to see the drama moving on a series of distinct planes. Yet the action of each is brought into sufficient relation with all the others; the incongruity, so far as it survives, only increases the delightful humor; and the whole is so skilfully removed from the tests of common sense and reason, and clothed in such an iridescent veil of poetry, that the play remains a unique triumph in its kind.

For further details on the life and work of Shakspere, the following may be referred to: Dowden's *Shakspere Primer,* and *Shakspere, His Mind and Art;* Sidney Lee's *Life of William Shakespeare* (revised edition, 1909); and *Shakspere and His Predecessors,* by F. S. Boas. For a general account of the English drama of the period see A. W.

Ward's *History of English Dramatic Literature* (revised edition, 1899) and F. E. Schelling's *Elizabethan Drama,* both of which are rich in bibliography. For questions of language and grammar, see A. Schmidt's *Shakespeare Lexicon;* J. Bartlett's *Concordance to Shakespeare,* and E. A. Abbott's *Shakespearian Grammar.* As usual, Dr. H. H. Furness's *Variorum* edition of the present play is a compendium of the results of scholarship on the subject.

I again wish to thank Mr. R. G. Martin for substantial assistance.

W. A. N.

Harvard University, August, 1909.

CONTENTS

PAGE

Preface 9

Introduction

I. Shakspere and the English Drama 15

II. *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* 32

Text 45

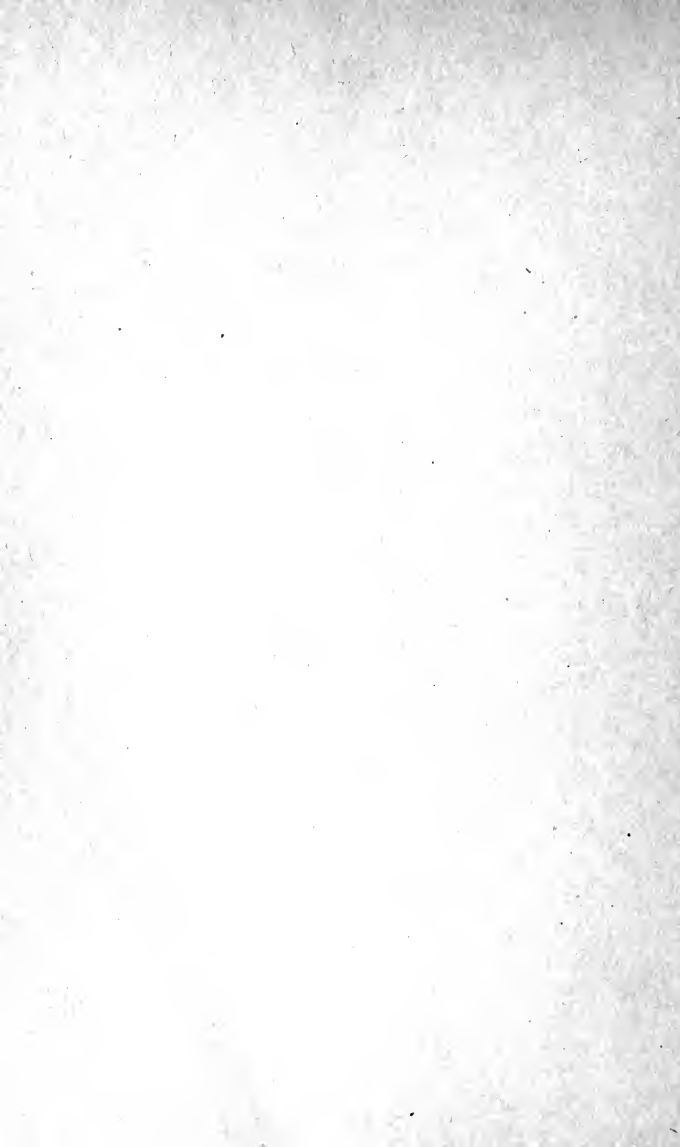
Notes 133

Word Index 155

Appendix

Helps to Study 159

Theme Subjects 164



INTRODUCTION

I. SHAKSPERE AND THE ENGLISH DRAMA

The wonderful rapidity of the development of the English drama in the last quarter of the sixteenth century stands in striking contrast to the slowness of its growth before that period. The religious drama, out of which the modern dramatic forms were to spring, had dragged through centuries with comparatively little change, and was still alive when, in 1576, the first theatre was built in London. By 1600 Shakspere had written more than half his plays and stood completely master of the art which he brought to a pitch unsurpassed in any age. Much of this extraordinary later progress was due to contemporary causes; but there entered into it also certain other elements which can be understood only in the light of the attempts that had been made in the three or four preceding centuries.

The Drama before Shakspere.

In England, as in Greece, the drama sprang from religious ceremonial. The Mass, the centre of the public worship of the Roman church, contained dramatic material in the gestures of the officiating priests, in the narratives contained in the Lessons, and in the responsive singing and chanting. Latin, the language

in which the services were conducted, was unintelligible to the mass of the people, and as early as the fifth century the clergy had begun to use such devices as *tableaux vivants* of scenes like the marriage in Cana and the Adoration of the Magi to make comprehensible important events in Bible history. Later, the Easter services were illuminated by representations of the scene at the sepulchre on the morning of the Resurrection, in which a wooden, and afterwards a stone, structure was used for the tomb itself, and the dialogue was chanted by different speakers representing respectively the angel, the disciples, and the women. From such beginnings as this there gradually evolved the earliest form of the MIRACLE PLAY.

As the presentations became more elaborate, the place of performance was moved first to the churchyard, then to the fields, and finally to the streets and open spaces of the towns. With this change of locality went a change in the language and in the actors and an extension of the field from which the subjects were chosen. Latin gave way to the vernacular, and the priests to laymen; and miracle plays representing the lives of patron saints were given by schools, trade gilds, and other lay institutions. A further development appeared when, instead of single plays, whole series such as the extant York, Chester, and Coventry cycles were given, dealing in chronological order with the most important events in Bible history from the Creation to the Day of Judgment.

The stage used for the miracle play as thus devel-

oped was a platform mounted on wheels, which was moved from space to space through the streets. Each trade undertook one or more plays, and, when possible, these were allotted with reference to the nature of the particular trade. Thus the play representing the visit of the Magi bearing gifts to the infant Christ was given to the goldsmiths, and the Building of the Ark to the carpenters. The costumes were conventional and frequently grotesque. Judas always wore red hair and a red beard; Herod appeared as a fierce Saracen; the devil had a terrifying mask and a tail; and divine personages wore gilt hair.

Meanwhile the attitude of the church towards these performances had changed. Priests were forbidden to take part in them, and as early as the fourteenth century we find sermons directed against them. The secular management had a more important result in the introduction of comic elements. Figures such as Noah's wife and Herod became frankly farcical, and whole episodes drawn from contemporary life and full of local color were invented, in which the original aim of edification was displaced by an explicit attempt at pure entertainment. Most of these features were characteristic of the religious drama in general throughout Western Europe. But the local and contemporary elements naturally tended to become national; and in England we find in these humorous episodes the beginnings of native comedy.

Long before the miracle plays had reached their height, the next stage in the development of the

drama had begun. Even in very early performances there had appeared, among the *dramatis personæ* drawn from the Scriptures, personifications of abstract qualities such as Righteousness, Peace, Mercy, and Truth. In the fifteenth century this allegorical tendency, which was prevalent also in the non-dramatic literature of the age, resulted in the rise of another kind of play, the MORALITY, in which all the characters were personifications, and in which the aim, at first the teaching of moral lessons, later became frequently satirical. Thus the most powerful of all the Moralities, Sir David Lindesay's *Satire of the Three Estates*, is a direct attack upon the corruption in the church just before the Reformation.

The advance implied in the Morality consisted not so much in any increase in the vitality of the characters or in the interest of the plot (in both of which, indeed, there was usually a falling off), as in the fact that in it the drama had freed itself from the bondage of having to choose its subject matter from one set of sources—the Bible, the Apocrypha, and the Lives of the Saints. This freedom was shared by the INTERLUDE, a form not always to be distinguished from the Morality, but one in which the tendency was to substitute for personified abstractions actual social types such as the Priest, the Pardoner, or the Palmer. A feature of both forms was the Vice, a humorous character who appeared under the various disguises of Hypocrisy, Fraud, and the like, and whose function it was to make fun, chiefly at the expense of the Devil.

The Vice is historically important as having bequeathed some of his characteristics to the Fool of the later drama.

John Heywood, the most important writer of Interludes, lived well into the reign of Elizabeth, and even the miracle play persisted into the reign of her successor in the seventeenth century. But long before it finally disappeared it had become a mere medieval survival. A new England had meantime come into being and new forces were at work, manifesting themselves in a dramatic literature infinitely beyond anything even suggested by the crude forms which have been described.

The great European intellectual movement known as the Renaissance had at last reached England, and it brought with it materials for an unparalleled advance in all the living forms of literature. Italy and the classics, especially, supplied literary models and material. Not only were translations from these sources abundant, but Italian players visited England, and performed before Queen Elizabeth. France and Spain, as well as Italy, flooded the literary market with collections of tales, from which, both in the original languages and in such translations as are found in Paynter's *Palace of Pleasure* (published 1566-67), the dramatists drew materials for their plots.

These literary conditions, however, did not do much beyond offering a means of expression. For a

movement so magnificent in scale as that which produced the Elizabethan Drama, something is needed besides models and material. In the present instance this something is to be found in the state of exaltation which characterized the spirit of the English people in the days of Queen Elizabeth. Politically, the nation was at last one after the protracted divisions of the Reformation, and its pride was stimulated by its success in the fight with Spain. Intellectually, it was sharing with the rest of Europe the exhilaration of the Renaissance. New lines of action in all parts of the world, new lines of thought in all departments of scholarship and speculation, were opening up; and the whole land was throbbing with life.

In its very beginnings the new movement in England showed signs of that combination of native tradition and foreign influence which was to characterize it throughout. The first regular English comedy, Udall's *Ralph Roister Doister* was an adaptation of the plot of the *Miles Gloriosus* of Plautus to contemporary English life. After a short period of experiment by amateurs working chiefly under the influence of Seneca, we come on a band of professional playwrights who not only prepared the way for Shakspere, but in some instances produced works of great intrinsic worth. The mythological dramas of Lyly with the bright repartee of their prose dialogue and the music of their occasional lyrics, the interesting experiments of Greene and Peele, and the horrors of the tragedy of Kyd, are all full of suggestions of

what was to come. But by far the greatest of Shakspere's forerunners was Christopher Marlowe, who not only has the credit of fixing blank verse as the future poetic medium for English tragedy, but who in his plays from *Tamburlaine* to *Edward II.* contributed to the list of the great permanent masterpieces of the English drama.

It was in the professional society of these men that Shakspere found himself when he came to London.

Shakspere's Early Life.

Born in the provincial town of Stratford-on-Avon in the heart of England, he was baptized on April 26, 1564 (May 6th, according to our reckoning). The exact day of his birth is unknown. His father was John Shakspere, a fairly prosperous tradesman, who may be supposed to have followed the custom of his class in educating his son. If this were so, William would be sent to the Grammar School, already able to read, when he was seven, and there he would be set to work on Latin Grammar, followed by reading, up to the fourth year, in Cato's *Maxims*, Æsop's *Fables*, and parts of Ovid, Cicero, and the medieval poet Mantuanus. If he continued through the fifth and sixth years, he would read parts of Vergil, Horace, Terence, Plautus, and the Satirists. Greek was not usually taught in the Grammar Schools. Whether he went through this course or not we have no means of knowing, except the evidence afforded by the use of the classics in his works, and the famous dictum of his friend, Ben Jonson, that he had "small Latin and

less Greek." What we are sure of is that he was a boy of remarkable acuteness of observation, who used his chances for picking up facts of all kinds; for only thus could he have accumulated the fund of information which he put to such a variety of uses in his writings.

Throughout the poet's boyhood the fortunes of John Shakspere kept improving until he reached the position of High Bailiff or Mayor of Stratford. When William was about thirteen, however, his father began to meet with reverses, and these are conjectured to have led to the boy's being taken from school early and set to work. What business he was taught we do not know, and indeed we have little more information about him till the date of his marriage in November, 1582, to Anne Hathaway, a woman from a neighboring village, who was seven years his senior. Concerning his occupations in the years immediately preceding and succeeding his marriage several traditions have come down,—of his having been apprenticed as a butcher, of his having taken part in poaching expeditions, and the like—but none of these is based upon sufficient evidence. About 1585 he left Stratford, and probably by the next year he had found his way to London.

How soon and in what capacity he first became attached to the theatres we are again unable to say, but by 1592 he had certainly been engaged in theatrical affairs long enough to give some occasion for the jealous outburst of a rival playwright, Robert

Greene, who in a pamphlet posthumously published in that year, accused him of plagiarism. Henry Chettle, the editor of Greene's pamphlet, shortly after apologized for his connection with the charge, and bore witness to Shakspere's honorable reputation as a man and to his skill both as an actor and a dramatist.

Robert Greene, who thus supplies us with the earliest extant indications of his rival's presence in London, was in many ways a typical figure among the playwrights with whom Shakspere worked during this early period. A member of both universities, Greene came to the metropolis while yet a young man, and there led a life of the most diversified literary activity, varied with bouts of the wildest debauchery. He was a writer of satirical and controversial pamphlets, of romantic tales, of elegiac, pastoral, and lyric poetry, a translator, a dramatist,— in fact, a literary jack-of-all-trades. The society in which he lived consisted in part of "University Wits" like himself, in part of the low men and women who haunted the vile taverns of the slums to prey upon such as he. "A world of blackguardism dashed with genius," it has been called and the phrase is fit enough. Among such surroundings Greene lived, and among them he died, bankrupt in body and estate, the victim of his own ill-governed passions.

In conjunction with such men as this Shakspere began his life-work. His first dramatic efforts were made in revising the plays of his predecessors with a

view to their revival on the stage; and in *Titus Andronicus* and the first part of *Henry VI.* we have examples of this kind of work. The next step was probably the production of plays in collaboration with other writers, and to this practice, which he almost abandoned in the middle of his career, he seems to have returned in his later years in such plays as *Pericles, Henry VIII.,* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen.* How far Shakspere was of this dissolute set to which his fellow-workers belonged it is impossible to tell; but we know that by and by, as he gained mastery over his art and became more and more independent in work and in fortune, he left this sordid life behind him, and aimed at the establishment of a family. In half a dozen years from the time of Greene's attack, he had reached the top of his profession, was a sharer in the profits of his theatre, and had invested his savings in land and houses in his native town. The youth who ten years before had left Stratford poor and burdened with a wife and three children, had now become "William Shakspere, Gentleman."

During these years Shakspere's literary work was not confined to the drama, which, indeed, was then hardly regarded as a form of literature. In 1593 he published *Venus and Adonis,* and in 1594, *Lucrece,* two poems belonging to a class of highly wrought versions of classical legends which was then fashionable, and of which Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* is the other most famous example. For several years,

too, in the last decade of the sixteenth century and the first few years of the seventeenth, he was composing a series of sonnets on love and friendship, in this, too, following a literary fashion of the time. Yet these give us more in the way of self-revelation than anything else he has left. From them we seem to be able to catch glimpses of his attitude towards his profession, and one of them makes us realize so vividly his perception of the tragic risks of his surroundings that it is set down here:

> O, for my sake do you with Fortune chide,
> The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,
> That did not better for my life provide
> Than public means which public manners breeds.
> Thence comes it that my name receives a brand,
> And almost thence my nature is subdued
> To what it works in, like the dyer's hand:
> Pity me then and wish I were renewed;
> Whilst, like a willing patient, I will drink
> Potions of eisel 'gainst my strong infection;
> No bitterness that I will bitter think,
> Nor double penance to correct correction.
> Pity me, then dear friend, and I assure ye
> Even that your pity is enough to cure me.

It does not seem possible to avoid the inference lying on the surface of this poem; but whatever confessions it may imply, it serves, too, to give us the assurance that Shakspere did not easily and blindly yield to the temptations that surrounded the life of the theatre of his time.

For the theatre of Shakspere's day was no very reputable affair. Externally it appears to us now a very meagre apparatus — almost absurdly so, when we reflect on the grandeur of the compositions for which it gave occasion. A roughly circular wooden building, with a roof over the stage and over the galleries, but with the pit often open to the wind and weather, having very little scenery and practically no attempt at the achievement of stage-illusion, such was the scene of the production of some of the greatest imaginative works the world has seen. Nor was the audience very choice. The more respectable citizens of Puritan tendencies frowned on the theatre to such an extent that it was found advisable to place the buildings outside the city limits, and beyond the jurisdiction of the city fathers. The pit was thronged with a motley crowd of petty tradesfolk and the dregs of the town; the gallants of the time sat on stools on the stage, "drinking" tobacco and chaffing the actors, their efforts divided between displaying their wit and their clothes. The actors were all male, the women's parts being taken by boys whose voices were not yet broken. The costumes, frequently the cast-off clothing of the gallants, were often gorgeous, but seldom appropriate. Thus the success of the performance had to depend upon the excellence of the piece, the merit of the acting, and the readiness of appreciation of the audience.

The Elizabethan Theatre.

This last point, however, was more to be relied

upon than a modern student might imagine. Despite their dubious respectability, the Elizabethan playgoers must have been of wonderfully keen intellectual susceptibilities. For clever feats in the manipulation of language, for puns, happy alliterations, delicate melody such as we find in the lyrics of the times, for the thunder of the pentameter as it rolls through the tragedies of Marlowe, they had a practiced taste. Qualities which we now expect to appeal chiefly to the literary student were keenly relished by men who could neither read nor write, and who at the same time enjoyed jokes which would be too broad, and stage massacres which would be too bloody, for a modern audience of sensibilities much less acute in these other directions. In it all we see how far-reaching was the wonderful vitality of the time.

Shakspere's Dramatic Development.

This audience Shakspere knew thoroughly, and in his writing he showed himself always, with whatever growth in permanent artistic qualities, the clever man of business with his eye on the market. Thus we can trace throughout the course of his production two main lines: one indicative of the changes of theatrical fashions; one, more subtle and more liable to misinterpretation, showing the progress of his own spiritual growth.

The chronology of Shakspere's plays will probably never be made out with complete assurance, but already much has been ascertained (1) from external evidence such as dates of acting or publication, and

	COMEDIES	HISTORIES	TRAGEDIES
1590–93	Love's Labour's Lost		[1596, 97)
	Two Gentlemen of Verona		Romeo and Juliet (revised about
	Comedy of Errors	1. 2. 3. Henry VI	Titus Andronicus
		Richard III	
		Richard II	
1594, 95	Merchant of Venice	King John	
	Midsummer-Night's Dream		
	All's Well that Ends Well (?)		
1596–98	Taming of the Shrew	1. 2. Henry IV	
	Merry Wives of Windsor	Henry V	
1599, 1600	Much Ado about Nothing		
	As You Like It		Julius Caesar
1601	Twelfth Night		
1602	Troilus and Cressida		Hamlet
1603	All's Well (revised)		Hamlet (revised)
1604	Measure for Measure		Othello
1605, 6			Macbeth
			King Lear
1607	Pericles		Timon of Athens
1608			Antony and Cleopatra
1609			Coriolanus
1610, 11	Cymbeline		
	Winter's Tale		
	Tempest		
1612, 13	Two Noble Kinsmen	Henry VIII	

allusions in other works, and (2) from internal evidence such as references to books or events of known date, and considerations of meter and language. The arrangement on page 28 represents what is probably an approximately correct view of the chronological sequence of his works, though scholars are far from being agreed upon many of the details.

The first of these groups contains three comedies of a distinctly experimental character, and a number of chronicle-histories, some of which, like the three parts of *Henry VI.,* were almost certainly written in collaboration with other playwrights. The comedies are light, full of ingenious plays on words, and the verse is often rhymed. The first of them, at least, shows the influence of Lyly. The histories also betray a considerable delight in language for its own sake, and the Marlowesque blank verse, at its best eloquent and highly poetical, not infrequently becomes ranting, while the pause at the end of each line tends to become monotonous. No copy of *Romeo and Juliet* in its earliest form is known to be in existence, and the extent of Shakspere's share in *Titus Andronicus* is still debated.

The second period contains a group of comedies marked by brilliance in the dialogue; wholesomeness, capacity, and high spirits in the main characters, and a pervading feeling of good-humor. The histories contain a larger comic element than in the first period, and are no longer suggestive of Marlowe. Rhymes have become less frequent, and the blank verse has

freed itself from the bondage of the end-stopped line.

The plays of the third period are tragedies, or comedies with a prevailing tragic tone. Shakspere here turned his attention to those elements in life which produce perplexity and disaster, and in this series of masterpieces we have his most magnificent achievement. His power of perfect adaptation of language to thought and feeling had now reached its height, and his verse had become thoroughly flexible without having lost strength.

In the fourth period Shakspere returned to comedy. These plays written during his last years in London, are again romantic in subject and treatment, and technically seem to show the influence of the earlier successes of Beaumont and Fletcher. But in place of the high spirits which characterized the comedies of the earlier periods we have a placid optimism, and a recurrence of situations which are more ingenious than plausible, and which are marked externally by reunions and reconciliations and internally by repentance and forgiveness. The verse is singularly sweet and highly poetical; and the departure from the end-stopped line has now gone so far that we see clearly the beginnings of that tendency which went to such an extreme in some of Shakspere's successors that it at times became hard to distinguish the metre at all.

In *Two Noble Kinsmen* and *Henry VIII.*, Shakspere again worked in partnership, the collaborator being, in all probability, John Fletcher.

Nothing that we know of Shakspere's life from external sources justifies us in saying, as has frequently been said, that the changes of mood in his work from period to period corresponded to changes in the man Shakspere. As an artist he certainly seems to have viewed life now in this light, now in that; but it is worth noting that the period of his gloomiest plays coincides with the period of his greatest worldly prosperity. It has already been hinted, too, that much of his change of manner and subject was dictated by the variations of theatrical fashion and the example of successful contemporaries.

Shakspere's Last Years.

Throughout nearly the whole of these marvelously fertile years Shakspere seems to have stayed in London; but from 1610 to 1612 he was making Stratford more and more his place of abode, and at the same time he was beginning to write less. After 1611 he wrote only in collaboration; and having spent about five years in peaceful retirement in the town from which he had set out a penniless youth, and to which he returned a man of reputation and fortune, he died on April 23, 1616. His only son, Hamnet, having died in boyhood, of his immediate family there survived him his wife and his two daughters, Susanna and Judith, both of whom were well married. He lies buried in the parish church of Stratford.

II. A Midsummer-Night's Dream

It is probable that the comedy of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* was written about 1594 or 1595, but this date is the result of fairly plausible conjecture rather than of certain inference. We know that it was in existence before 1598, for in that year appeared a book called *Palladis Tamia,* by Francis Meres, containing an explicit mention of the play. Meres's book is a kind of critical compilation, with a "Comparative Discourse of our English Poets with the Greek, Latin, and Italian Poets," and the passage in which the name of the present play occurs is so important for the chronology of Shakspere's works that it is worth while to quote it verbatim:

Date.

As the soul of Euphorbus was thought to live in Pythagoras: so the sweet witty soul of Ovid lives in mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakespeare. Witness his *Venus and Adonis;* his *Lucrece;* his sugared *Sonnets,* among his private friends, etc.

As Plautus and Seneca are accounted the best for Comedy and Tragedy among the Latins; so Shakespeare among the English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage. For Comedy: witness his *Gentlemen of Verona;* his *Errors;* his *Love's Labour's Lost;* his *Love's Labour's Won*[1]; his *Midsummer-Night's Dream;* and his *Merchant of Venice.*

[1] This play has not been certainly identified. If it is not lost, it may be represented in a revised form by *All's Well that Ends Well.*

For Tragedy: his *Richard II., Richard III., Henry IV., King John, Titus Andronicus,* and his *Romeo and Juliet.*

As Epius Stolo said that the Muses would speak with Plautus's tongue, if they would speak Latin: so I say that the Muses would speak with Shakespeare's fine filed phrase; if they would speak English.

The supposed allusions in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* to contemporary publications and events are of little assistance in fixing a more definite date than is supplied by Meres's reference. Two passages pointed out in the notes have been believed by some editors to have been suggested by lines in Spenser, but the connection is uncertain. The long speech by Titania in II. i. 88-114 is more important in this connection. It is quite probable that this remarkably detailed description of extraordinary weather does refer to the wet and stormy summer which brought distress upon English farmers in 1594. It is recorded also that in the same year, in a spectacle presented before the Scottish court, a Moor was substituted for a lion to prevent a panic in the audience; and some critics have found here a source of Snout's apprehension that the ladies may "be afeard of the lion." These trifling indications at least harmonize with the evidence from the meter and the general impression of the degree of maturity implied in the style and characterization of the play as a whole; and there is no apparent reason for doubting that it was first performed about the date of *Richard II.,* and probably shortly before the *Merchant of Venice.*

In 1600 two separate editions of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* were published, and on the earlier of these, called from its publisher the "Fisher Quarto," the present text is based. The second or "Roberts" quarto is a reproduction of the first with a few minor changes, and the version in the First Folio Edition, in which Shakspere's plays were collected in 1623, was taken from the second quarto, with the addition of more detailed stage-directions and of the division into acts.

Source of the Text.

A Midsummer-Night's Dream is one of the two or three plays of Shakspere for the main plot of which no original has been found. The tangled love-affairs of Hermia and Helena, Demetrius and Lysander, belong to a type of incident occurring with great frequency in romantic fiction, and it is reasonable to suppose that this series of situations, the least interesting though structurally the most important in the comedy, was contrived by Shakspere himself as a framework for the fantasy and humor in which lies its chief charm. In the *Diana* of Montemayor, a popular Spanish collection of romantic tales from which Shakspere drew part of the plot of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona,* there is found a love-potion whose effects remotely resemble those of the juice of love-in-idleness. The marriage festivities of Theseus, the references to the "rite of May" and the hunting scene in IV. i, 107 ff., and the name of Philostrate,

Source of the Plot.

are probably taken from Chaucer's *Knight's Tale,* and the dramatist may have got further information about the Athenian "Duke" from Plutarch's *Life of Theseus,* to which we know he had access in Sir Thomas North's translation.

The story of Pyramus and Thisbe, caricatured by the artisans, was accessible in Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women,* in the Elizabethan translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* by Golding—used elsewhere by Shakspere—and in various contemporary works. The mutilated form in which the story is presented here makes it impossible to fix on any one of these as a source, and the dramatist may well have used merely what he happened to remember of the tale. It is perhaps worth noting that the main theme of this story is practically identical with that of Romeo and Juliet, which Shakspere had recently treated tragically.

His memory and his imagination are certainly the main source of the fairy material of the play. The name Titania is used by Ovid for Diana, and Oberon was familiar in the romance of *Huon of Bordeaux,* in *The Faerie Queene,* and in Robert Greene's *James IV.* The Puck, Robin Goodfellow, had already appeared in literature also, but he was a household name in England. But these more or less literary elements are slight compared with the lore about fairies with which Shakspere, like every English boy of his time, must have become familiar as a child. Yet it is clear that on the popular beliefs about fairyland the drama-

tist's imagination has performed important changes, changes which in turn have affected popular belief, so that the fairy-stories which a modern child knows are partly due to pure tradition, partly to tradition modified by Shakspere. Shakspere had, of course, no theories about fairies; it was his imagination not his reason that refashioned them. It will help us to keep from getting too definite notions about them if we read along with the woodland scenes of this play the great speech by Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet,* where the mysterious people are imagined on a scale that would have made stage representation impossible.

O, then, I see Queen Mab hath been with you.
She is the fairies' midwife, and she comes
In shape no bigger than an agate-stone
On the fore-finger of an alderman,
Drawn with a team of little atomies
Over men's noses as they lie asleep;
Her waggon-spokes made of long spinners' legs,
The cover of the wings of grasshoppers,
Her traces of the smallest spider web,
Her collars of the moonshine's watery beams,
Her whip of cricket's bone, the lash of film,
Her waggoner a small grey-coated gnat,
Not half so big as a round little worm
Prick'd from the lazy finger of a maid;
Her chariot is an empty hazel-nut
Made by the joiner squirrel, or old grub,
Time out o' mind the fairies' coachmakers.
And in this state she gallops night by night
Through lovers' brains, and then they dream of love;
On courtiers' knees, that dream on curtsies straight;
O'er lawyers' fingers, who straight dream on fees;

O'er ladies' lips, who straight on kisses dream,
Which oft the angry Mab with blisters plagues,
Because their breath with sweetmeats tainted are.
Sometime she gallops o'er a courtier's nose,
And then dreams he of smelling out a suit;
And sometime comes she with a tithe-pig's tail
Tickling a parson's nose as 'a lies asleep,
Then he dreams of another benefice.
Sometime she driveth o'er a soldier's neck,
And then dreams he of cutting foreign throats,
Of breaches, ambuscadoes, Spanish blades,
Of healths five fathom deep; and then anon
Drums in his ear, at which he starts and wakes,
And being thus frighted swears a prayer or two
And sleeps again. This is that very Mab
That plats the manes of horses in the night,
And bakes the elf-locks in foul sluttish hairs,
Which, once untangled, much misfortune bodes.

Such fairies, it is clear, could hardly have been brought into the personal relations with Bottom which are so amusingly depicted in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream,* and they must be regarded as the product of the poet's imagination elaborating another side of the inconsistent and variable popular tradition.

Occasion of the Play.

A consideration of the most prominent elements in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* makes it fairly clear that it was not planned in the first place for performance on a public stage. The comparative weakness of interest in the main plot, the opportunities for spectacle, and the abundance of song and dance, suggest rather a court festivity; while the marriage of

Theseus at the beginning and the wedding-song at the close, point to some nobleman's marriage as the particular occasion. From the flattery of Queen Elizabeth in II. i. 157-164 and the praise of chastity in I. i. 74-75, it may be further inferred that the Queen herself was present. The marriage of the Earl of Derby to Elizabeth Vere at the court at Greenwich in 1595, and that of the Earl of Bedford to Lucy Harington in 1594, have been suggested as offering appropriate opportunities for the display of such a pageant as this fairy drama.

Meter.

Owing to its lyric quality *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* contains a very large proportion of rhyme, nearly one-third of the play being so written. In most of Shakspere's plays the rhymes occur in decasyllabic couplets and occasional songs; in this there is much greater variety. Rhyming couplets are frequently used in descriptive passages or love scenes. The ten-syllabled lines are sometimes arranged in triplets (II. ii. 110-112; III. ii. 159-161), or in quatrains with alternate rhymes (III. i. 105-8; III. ii. 122-5, 128-31, 442-5). The fairies speak often in a trochaic measure, usually in lines of four syllables, and the rhythm thus obtained is particularly effective for its suggestion of delicate lightness.

Prose is used by the artisans in ordinary conversation always, by the lovers and the group in the court of Theseus only in Act V. when they are jesting over the interlude, by the fairies never. It is, therefore,

employed in this play solely for humorous purposes. To heighten the comedy effect, prose and verse are sometimes used side by side contrastingly, as in the scenes between Titania and Bottom (III. i. 127 ff. and IV. i. 1-44).

The blank verse of the play is that which, since Marlowe, had been the standard meter of the English drama. The normal type of the blank verse has five iambic feet, that is, ten syllables with the accent falling on the even syllables. From this regular form, however, Shakspere deviates with great freedom, the commonest variations being the following:

1. The addition of an eleventh syllable, *e. g.:*

There will | I stay | for thee. | My good | Lysan | *der,*
I. i. 168.
Tell you, | I do | not, nor | I can | not love | *you,* II. i. 201.
Things grow | ing are | not ripe | until | their sea | *son,*
II. ii. 117.

Occasionally this extra syllable occurs in the middle of the line, at the main pause known as the cæsura, which is found most frequently, but not always, after the third foot, *e. g.:*

Not for | thy fair | y King | *dom.* || Fairies, | away, II. i. 144.

2. Frequently what seems an extra syllable is to be slurred in reading; *e. g.,* "spirit" and "whether" in the following lines are monosyllables:

Awake | the pert | and nim | ble spirit | of mirth | , I. i. 13.
Whether, if | you yield | not to | your fath | er's choice | ,
I. i. 69.

In

Either death | or you | I'll find | imme | diately | , II. ii. 156.

"either" is a monosyllable and "immediately" has four syllables. In some lines it is doubtful whether a syllable is to be slurred or sounded as a light extra syllable, as *e. g.*, "it" in

Our sex, | as well | as I, | may chide | you for it, III. ii. 218.

Conversely, a dissyllable may sometimes be pronounced as a trisyllable; *e. g.*,

That is, | hot ice | and won | d(e)rous | strange snow | , V. i. 59.

3. Sometimes an emphatic syllable, or one accompanied by a pause, stands alone as a foot, without an unaccented syllable; *e. g.*,

For part | ing us, | —O, | is all | forgot | , III. ii. 201.

4. Short lines, lacking one or more feet, occur; *e. g.*,

And kill me too, III. ii. 49.
Takes it in might, not merit, V. i. 92.

5. Long lines of twelve syllables occur; *e. g.*,

Uncouple in the western valley, let them go, IV. i. 106.

And what poor duty cannot do, noble respect, V. i. 91.

6. Frequently, especially in the first foot, a trochee is substituted for an iambus, *i. e.*, the accent falls on the odd instead of the even syllable; *e. g.*,

Turn′ 'd her | obedience, which is due to me, I. i. 37.
Sick′ness | is catching; O, were favour so, I. i. 186.
A privilege | nev′er | to see me more, III. ii. 79.

It must be remembered, however, that the pronunciation of some words has changed since Shakspere's time. Thus "business" has three syllables, in

> I must employ you in some bus-i-ness, I. i. 124.

"Edict" is accented on the last syllable in

> It stands as an edict′ in destiny, I. i. 151.

And "antique" on the first in

> These an′tique fables, nor these fairy toys, V. i. 3.

Words ending in "-ion" could have a dissyllabic termination; *e. g.*,

> So quick bright things come to confus-i-on, I. i. 149.

Language.

Although differences between the language of Shakspere and that of our own day are obvious to the most casual reader, there is a risk that the student may underestimate the extent of these differences, and, assuming that similarity of form implies identity of meaning, miss the true interpretation. The most important instances of change of meaning are explained in the notes; but a clearer view of the nature and extent of the contrast between the language of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* and modern English will be gained by a classification of the most frequent features of this contrast. Some of the Elizabethan usages are merely results of the carelessness and freedom which the more elastic standards of the Elizabethan time permitted; others are forms of expression at that time quite accurate, but now become obsolete.

(1) Nouns. (*a*) Abstract nouns are often used in the plural; *e. g.,* "solemnities," I. i. 11; "shames," III. ii. 385.

(*b*) Nouns are sometimes used as adjectives; *e. g.,* "the *Carthage* queen," I. i. 173; or as verbs; *e. g.,* "*versing* love," II. i. 67.

(2) Pronouns. (*a*) The possessive "its" did not come into common use until after the middle of the seventeenth century, and in Shakspere, as in other early writers, we have "his"; *e. g.,* "the green corn Hath rotted ere *his* youth," II. i. 95; "Dark night, that from the eye *his* function takes," III. ii. 177.

(*b*) Confusion between the personal and reflexive forms is common; *e. g.,* "Lysander and *myself* shall meet," I. i. 217.

(c) The ethical dative is commoner in Shakspere than in modern speech; *e. g.,* "roar *you* as gently," I. ii. 81; "kill *me* a red-hipp'd humble-bee," IV. i. 11.

(*d*) The modern distinction among the relative pronouns, *who, which, that, as,* is not observed; *e. g.,* "every man's name, *which* is thought fit," I. ii. 4.

(*e*) The objective case of the personal pronoun is sometimes used reflexively where modern English requires no object; *e. g.,* "We'll rest *us*," II. ii. 37; "sit *thee* down," IV. i. 1.

(3) Adjectives. (*a*) Double comparatives and superlatives occur; *e. g.,* "What *worser* place," II. i. 208; "for the *more better* assurance," III. i. 19.

(b) Adjectives are sometimes used as nouns; *e. g.,*

"Demetrius loves your *fair,* O happy *fair!"* I. i. 182. "Gentles," V. i. 126.

(4) VERBS. (*a*) A singular verb is often found with a plural subject; *e. g.,* "Where oxlips and the nodding violet *grows,"* II. i. 250; "virtues . . . *doth* move me," III. i. 139.

(*b*) The "n" is frequently dropped from the ending of the past participle of strong verbs; *e. g.,* "spoke," I. i. 112; "broke," I. i. 175.

(*c*) Verbs of motion are at times omitted; *e. g.,* "thou shalt not from this grove," II. i. 146; "I'll to my queen," III. ii. 375.

(*d*) "Be" is sometimes used for "are" in the plural of the present indicative; *e. g.,* "Those *be* rubies," II. i. 12; "whereon these sleepers *be,"* IV. i. 85.

(*e*) "To" is sometimes used with the infinitive where it is omitted now, and conversely; *e. g.,* "How long within this wood intend you ‸ stay?" II. i. 138.

(*f*) The infinitive with "to" is occasionally used in place of the construction with a participle or a gerund; *e. g.,* "make a heaven of hell, *To die* upon the hand," II. i. 244; "rivals, *to mock* Helena," III. ii. 156.

(*g*) A verb now only intransitive may be used transitively; *e. g.,* "her mantle she did *fall,"* V. i. 141.

(5) ADVERBS. (*a*) Double negatives are used with a merely intensive force; *e.g.,* "nor never," II. ii. 126; "nor none," III. ii. 135; "I do not, nor I cannot love you," II. i. 201.

(*b*) The form of the adjective is often used for

the adverb; *e. g.,* "that kills himself most *gallant* for love," I. ii. 23; "So *quick* bright things come to confusion," I. i. 149.

(6) Prepositions. (*a*) These are sometimes omitted; *e. g.,* "Steal forth thy father's house," I. i. 164; "fly my presence," II. ii. 97.

(*b*) A preposition is occasionally used where a modern verb takes a direct object; *e. g.,* "marry with Demetrius," I. i. 40; "admiring of his qualities," I. i. 231; "warbling of one song," III. ii. 206.

(*c*) The usage of prepositions is often different from that of today; *e. g.,* "*Against* our nuptial, and confer with you *Of* something," I. i. 125; "Or *in* the beached margent of the sea," II. i. 85; "More fond *on* her than she *upon* her love," II. i. 266.

(7) Conjunctions. These are often omitted; *e. g.,* "look‸you arm yourself," I. i. 117; "As‸it should pierce," II. i. 160.

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

[DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

THESEUS, duke of Athens.
EGEUS, father to Hermia.
LYSANDER, betrothed to Hermia.
DEMETRIUS, in love with Hermia.
PHILOSTRATE, master of the revels to Theseus.

QUINCE, a carpenter,	presenting	PROLOGUE.
BOTTOM, a weaver,		PYRAMUS.
FLUTE, a bellows-mender,		THISBE.
SNOUT, a tinker,		WALL.
SNUG, a joiner,		LION.
STARVELING, a tailor,		MOONSHINE.

HIPPOLYTA, queen of the Amazons, betrothed to Theseus.
HERMIA, daughter to Egeus, betrothed to Lysander.
HELENA, in love with Demetrius.
OBERON, king of the fairies.
TITANIA, queen of the fairies.
ROBIN GOODFELLOW, a Puck.

PEASEBLOSSOM,	fairies.
COBWEB,	
MOTH,	
MUSTARDSEED,	

Other fairies attending their King and Queen.
Attendants on Theseus and Hippolyta.

SCENE: *Athens, and a wood near it.*]

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

ACT I.

[SCENE I. *Athens. The palace of Theseus.*]

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, [PHILOSTRATE,] *with others.*

The. Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour
Draws on apace. Four happy days bring in
Another moon; but, O, methinks how slow
This old moon wanes! She lingers my desires,
5 Like to a step-dame or a dowager
Long withering out a young man's revenue.
Hip. Four days will quickly steep themselves in night;
Four nights will quickly dream away the time;
And then the moon, like to a silver bow
10 New-bent in heaven, shall behold the night
Of our solemnities.
The. Go, Philostrate,
Stir up the Athenian youth to merriments;
Awake the pert and nimble spirit of mirth;
Turn melancholy forth to funerals;
15 The pale companion is not for our pomp.
[*Exit Philostrate.*]
Hippolyta, I woo'd thee with my sword,
And won thy love, doing thee injuries;

But I will wed thee in another key,
With pomp, with triumph, and with revelling.

Enter EGEUS, HERMIA, LYSANDER, *and* DEMETRIUS.

Ege. Happy be Theseus, our renowned Duke! 20
The. Thanks, good Egeus; what's the news with thee?
Ege. Full of vexation come I, with complaint
Against my child, my daughter Hermia.
Stand forth, Demetrius. My noble lord,
This man hath my consent to marry her. 25
Stand forth, Lysander: and, my gracious Duke,
This man hath bewitch'd the bosom of my child.
Thou, thou, Lysander, thou hast given her rhymes,
And interchang'd love-tokens with my child.
Thou hast by moonlight at her window sung 30
With faining voice verses of faining love,
And stolen the impression of her fantasy
With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gawds, conceits,
Knacks, trifles, nosegays, sweetmeats,—messengers
Of strong prevailment in unhard'ned youth. 35
With cunning hast thou filch'd my daughter's heart,
Turn'd her obedience, which is due to me,
To stubborn harshness; and, my gracious Duke,
Be it so she will not here before your Grace
Consent to marry with Demetrius, 40
I beg the ancient privilege of Athens,
As she is mine, I may dispose of her;
Which shall be either to this gentleman
Or to her death, according to our law

45 Immediately provided in that case.

The. What say you, Hermia? Be advis'd, fair maid.
To you your father should be as a god,
One that compos'd your beauties, yea, and one
To whom you are but as a form in wax
50 By him imprinted, and within his power
To leave the figure or disfigure it.
Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.

Her. So is Lysander.

The. In himself he is;
But in this kind, wanting your father's voice,
55 The other must be held the worthier.

Her. I would my father look'd but with my eyes.

The. Rather your eyes must with his judgment look.

Her. I do entreat your Grace to pardon me.
I know not by what power I am made bold,
60 Nor how it may concern my modesty,
In such a presence here to plead my thoughts;
But I beseech your Grace that I may know
The worst that may befall me in this case,
If I refuse to wed Demetrius.

65 *The.* Either to die the death or to abjure
For ever the society of men.
Therefore, fair Hermia, question your desires,
Know of your youth, examine well your blood,
Whether, if you yield not to your father's choice,
70 You can endure the livery of a nun,
For aye to be in shady cloister mew'd,

To live a barren sister all your life,
Chanting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon.
Thrice-blessed they that master so their blood
To undergo such maiden pilgrimage; 75
But earthlier happy is the rose distill'd,
Than that which withering on the virgin thorn
Grows, lives and dies in single blessedness.

Her. So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord,
Ere I will yield my virgin patent up 80
Unto his lordship, whose unwished yoke
My soul consents not to give sovereignty.

The. Take time to pause; and, by the next new moon—
The sealing-day betwixt my love and me,
For everlasting bond of fellowship— 85
Upon that day either prepare to die
For disobedience to your father's will,
Or else to wed Demetrius, as he would,
Or on Diana's altar to protest
For aye austerity and single life. 90

Dem. Relent, sweet Hermia; and, Lysander, yield
Thy crazed title to my certain right.

Lys. You have her father's love, Demetrius,
Let me have Hermia's; do you marry him.

Ege. Scornful Lysander! true, he hath my love, 95
And what is mine my love shall render him.
And she is mine, and all my right of her
I do estate unto Demetrius.

Lys. I am, my lord, as well deriv'd as he,
As well possess'd; my love is more than his; 100

My fortunes every way as fairly rank'd,
If not with vantage, as Demetrius';
And which is more than all these boasts can be,
I am belov'd of beauteous Hermia.
105 Why should not I then prosecute my right?
Demetrius, I'll avouch it to his head,
Made love to Nedar's daughter, Helena,
And won her soul; and she, sweet lady, dotes,
Devoutly dotes, dotes in idolatry,
110 Upon this spotted and inconstant man.

The. I must confess that I have heard so much,
And with Demetrius thought to have spoke thereof;
But, being over-full of self-affairs,
My mind did lose it. But, Demetrius, come;
115 And come, Egeus; you shall go with me,
I have some private schooling for you both.
For you, fair Hermia, look you arm yourself
To fit your fancies to your father's will;
Or else the law of Athens yields you up—
120 Which by no means we may extenuate—
To death, or to a vow of single life.
Come, my Hippolyta; what cheer, my love?
Demetrius and Egeus, go along.
I must employ you in some business
125 Against our nuptial, and confer with you
Of something nearly that concerns yourselves.

Ege. With duty and desire we follow you.

[*Exeunt all but Lysander and Hermia.*

Lys. How now, my love! why is your cheek so pale?

How chance the roses there do fade so fast?
Her. Belike for want of rain, which I could well 130
Beteem them from the tempest of my eyes.
Lys. Ay me! for aught that I could ever read
Could ever hear by tale or history,
The course of true love never did run smooth;
But, either it was different in blood,— 135
Her. O cross! too high to be enthrall'd to low.
Lys. Or else misgraffed in respect of years,—
Her. O spite! too old to be engag'd to young.
Lys. Or else it stood upon the choice of friends,—
Her. O hell! to choose love by another's eyes. 140
Lys. Or, if there were a sympathy in choice,
War, death, or sickness did lay siege to it,
Making it momentany as a sound,
Swift as a shadow, short as any dream,
Brief as the lightning in the collied night, 145
That, in a spleen, unfolds both heaven and earth,
And ere a man hath power to say "Behold!"
The jaws of darkness do devour it up;
So quick bright things come to confusion.
Her. If then true lovers have been ever cross'd, 150
It stands as an edict in destiny.
Then let us teach our trial patience,
Because it is a customary cross,
As due to love as thoughts and dreams and sighs,
Wishes and tears, poor fancy's followers. 155
Lys. A good persuasion; therefore, hear me, Hermia.
I have a widow aunt, a dowager

Of great revenue, and she hath no child.
From Athens is her house remote seven leagues;
160 And she respects me as her only son.
There, gentle Hermia, may I marry thee;
And to that place the sharp Athenian law
Cannot pursue us. If thou lov'st me then,
Steal forth thy father's house to-morrow night;
165 And in the wood, a league without the town,
Where I did meet thee once with Helena
To do observance to a morn of May,
There will I stay for thee.

Her. My good Lysander!
I swear to thee, by Cupid's strongest bow,
170 By his best arrow with the golden head,
By the simplicity of Venus' doves,
By that which knitteth souls and prospers loves,
And by that fire which burn'd the Carthage queen,
When the false Troyan under sail was seen,
175 By all the vows that ever men have broke,
In number more than ever women spoke,
In that same place thou hast appointed me
To-morrow truly will I meet with thee.

Lys. Keep promise, love. Look, here comes Helena.

Enter HELENA.

180 *Her.* God speed fair Helena! Whither away?

Hel. Call you me fair? That fair again unsay.
Demetrius loves your fair, O happy fair!
Your eyes are lode-stars, and your tongue's sweet air

More tuneable than lark to shepherd's ear
When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear. 185
Sickness is catching; O, were favour so,
Yours would I catch, fair Hermia, ere I go;
My ear should catch your voice, my eye your eye,
My tongue should catch your tongue's sweet melody.
Were the world mine, Demetrius being bated, 190
The rest I'll give to be to you translated.
O, teach me how you look, and with what art
You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart.

Her. I frown upon him, yet he loves me still.

Hel. O that your frowns would teach my smiles such skill! 195

Her. I give him curses, yet he gives me love.

Hel. O that my prayers could such affection move!

Her. The more I hate, the more he follows me.

Hel. The more I love, the more he hateth me.

Her. His folly, Helena, is no fault of mine. 200

Hel. None, but your beauty. Would that fault were mine!

Her. Take comfort; he no more shall see my face;
Lysander and myself will fly this place.
Before the time I did Lysander see,
Seem'd Athens as a paradise to me; 205
O, then, what graces in my love do dwell,
That he hath turned a heaven unto a hell!

Lys. Helen, to you our minds we will unfold.
To-morrow night, when Phœbe doth behold
Her silver visage in the watery glass, 210
Decking with liquid pearl the bladed grass,

A time that lovers' flights doth still conceal,
Through Athens' gates have we devis'd to steal.
Her. And in the wood, where often you and I
215 Upon faint primrose-beds were wont to lie,
Emptying our bosoms of their counsel sweet,
There my Lysander and myself shall meet;
And thence from Athens turn away our eyes,
To seek new friends and stranger companies.
220 Farewell, sweet playfellow! Pray thou for us;
And good luck grant thee thy Demetrius!
Keep word, Lysander; we must starve our sight
From lovers' food till morrow deep midnight.
Lys. I will, my Hermia. [*Exit Herm.*
Helena, adieu:
225 As you on him, Demetrius dote on you! [*Exit.*
Hel. How happy some o'er other some can be!
Through Athens I am thought as fair as she.
But what of that? Demetrius thinks not so;
He will not know what all but he do know;
230 And as he errs, doting on Hermia's eyes,
So I, admiring of his qualities.
Things base and vile, holding no quantity,
Love can transpose to form and dignity.
Love looks not with the eyes but with the mind,
235 And therefore is wing'd Cupid painted blind.
Nor hath Love's mind of any judgment taste;
Wings and no eyes figure unheedy haste;
And therefore is Love said to be a child,

Because in choice he is so oft beguil'd.
As waggish boys in game themselves forswear, 240
So the boy Love is perjur'd every where:
For ere Demetrius look'd on Hermia's eyne,
He hail'd down oaths that he was only mine;
And when this hail some heat from Hermia felt,
So he dissolv'd, and showers of oaths did melt. 245
I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight;
Then to the wood will he to-morrow night
Pursue her; and for this intelligence
If I have thanks, it is a dear expense.
But herein mean I to enrich my pain, 250
To have his sight thither and back again.

[*Exit.*

[Scene II. *Athens. Quince's house.*]

Enter Quince, Snug, Bottom, Flute, Snout, *and* Starveling.

Quin. Is all our company here?

Bot. You were best to call them generally, man by man, according to the scrip.

Quin. Here is the scroll of every man's name, which is thought fit, through all Athens, to play in 5 our interlude before the Duke and the Duchess, on his wedding-day at night.

Bot. First, good Peter Quince, say what the play treats on, then read the names of the actors, and so grow to a point. 10

Quin. Marry, our play is, *The most lamentable*

comedy, and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisby.

Bot. A very good piece of work, I assure you, and a merry. Now, good Peter Quince, call forth your
15 actors by the scroll. Masters, spread yourselves.

Quin. Answer as I call you. Nick Bottom, the weaver.

Bot. Ready. Name what part I am for, and proceed.

20 *Quin.* You, Nick Bottom, are set down for Pyramus.

Bot. What is Pyramus? A lover, or a tyrant?

Quin. A lover, that kills himself most gallant for love.

25 *Bot.* That will ask some tears in the true performing of it. If I do it, let the audience look to their eyes. I will move storms, I will condole in some measure. To the rest. Yet my chief humour is for a tyrant. I could play Ercles rarely, or a part
30 to tear a cat in, to make all split.

"The raging rocks
And shivering shocks
Shall break the locks
Of prison gates;
35 And Phibbus' car
Shall shine from far
And make and mar
The foolish Fates."

This was lofty! Now name the rest of the players.
40 This is Ercles' vein, a tyrant's vein; a lover is more condoling.

Quin. Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.

Flu. Here, Peter Quince.

Quin. Flute, you must take Thisby on you.

Flu. What is Thisby? A wandering knight? 45

Quin. It is the lady that Pyramus must love.

Flu. Nay, faith, let not me play a woman; I have a beard coming.

Quin. That's all one; you shall play it in a mask, and you may speak as small as you will. 50

Bot. An I may hide my face, let me play Thisby too. I'll speak in a monstrous little voice. "Thisne! Thisne! Ah Pyramus, my lover dear! thy Thisby dear, and lady dear!"

Quin. No, no; you must play Pyramus; and, 55 Flute, you Thisby.

Bot. Well, proceed.

Quin. Robin Starveling, the tailor.

Star. Here, Peter Quince.

Quin. Robin Starveling, you must play Thisby's 60 mother. Tom Snout, the tinker.

Snout. Here, Peter Quince.

Quin. You, Pyramus' father; myself, Thisby's father. Snug, the joiner, you, the lion's part; and, I hope, here is a play fitted. 65

Snug. Have you the lion's part written? Pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study.

Quin. You may do it extempore, for it is nothing but roaring.

Bot. Let me play the lion too. I will roar, that I 70 will do any man's heart good to hear me. I will

roar, that I will make the Duke say, "Let him roar again, let him roar again."

Quin. An you should do it too terribly, you would
75 fright the Duchess and the ladies, that they would shriek; and that were enough to hang us all.

All. That would hang us, every mother's son.

Bot. I grant you, friends, if you should fright the ladies out of their wits, they would have no more
80 discretion but to hang us; but I will aggravate my voice so that I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove; I will roar you an 't were any nightingale.

Quin. You can play no part but Pyramus; for Pyramus is a sweet-fac'd man; a proper man, as one
85 shall see in a summer's day; a most lovely gentleman-like man: therefore you must needs play Pyramus.

Bot. Well, I will undertake it. What beard were I best to play it in?

Quin. Why, what you will.

90 *Bot.* I will discharge it in either your straw-colour beard, your orange-tawny beard, your purple-in-grain beard, or your French-crown-colour beard, your perfect yellow.

Quin. Some of your French crowns have no hair
95 at all, and then you will play barefac'd. But, masters, here are your parts; and I am to entreat you, request you, and desire you, to con them by to-morrow night; and meet me in the palace wood, a mile without the town, by moonlight. There will we rehearse, for if
100 we meet in the city, we shall be dogg'd with company, and our devices known. In the meantime I

will draw a bill of properties, such as our play wants. I pray you, fail me not.

Bot. We will meet; and there we may rehearse most obscenely and courageously. Take pains; be perfect; adieu. 105

Quin. At the Duke's oak we meet.

Bot. Enough; hold or cut bow-strings.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

[Scene I. *A wood near Athens.*]

Enter a Fairy *at one door and* Robin Goodfellow *at another.*

Robin. How now, spirit! whither wander you?
Fai. Over hill, over dale,
Thorough bush, thorough brier,
Over park, over pale,
5 Thorough flood, thorough fire,
I do wander every where,
Swifter than the moon's sphere;
And I serve the fairy Queen,
To dew her orbs upon the green.
10 The cowslips tall her pensioners be;
In their gold coats spots you see;
Those be rubies, fairy favours,
In those freckles live their savours.
I must go seek some dewdrops here
15 And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.
Farewell, thou lob of spirits; I'll be gone.
Our Queen and all her elves come here anon.
Robin. The King doth keep his revels here to-night;
Take heed the Queen come not within his sight.
20 For Oberon is passing fell and wrath,

Because that she as her attendant hath
A lovely boy stolen from an Indian king.
She never had so sweet a changeling;
And jealous Oberon would have the child
Knight of his train, to trace the forests wild; 25
But she perforce withholds the loved boy,
Crowns him with flowers, and makes him all her joy;
And now they never meet in grove or green,
By fountain clear, or spangled starlight sheen,
But they do square, that all their elves for fear 30
Creep into acorn-cups and hide them there.

Fai. Either I mistake your shape and making quite.
Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite
Call'd Robin Goodfellow. Are not you he
That frights the maidens of the villagery, 35
Skim milk, and sometimes labour in the quern,
And bootless make the breathless housewife churn,
And sometime make the drink to bear no barm,
Mislead night-wanderers, laughing at their harm?
Those that Hobgoblin call you, and sweet Puck, 40
You do their work, and they shall have good luck.
Are not you he?

Robin. Thou speakest aright;
I am that merry wanderer of the night.
I jest to Oberon and make him smile
When I a fat and bean-fed horse beguile, 45
Neighing in likeness of a filly foal;
And sometime lurk I in a gossip's bowl,
In very likeness of a roasted crab,
And when she drinks, against her lips I bob

50 And on her withered dewlap pour the ale.
The wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale,
Sometime for three-foot stool mistaketh me.
Then slip I from her bum, down topples she,
And "tailor" cries, and falls into a cough;
55 And then the whole quire hold their hips and laugh,
And waxen in their mirth, and neeze, and swear
A merrier hour was never wasted there.
But, room, fairy! here comes Oberon.

Fai. And here my mistress. Would that he were gone!

Enter the King of Fairies [OBERON] *at one door with his train; and the Queen* [TITANIA] *at another with hers.*

60 *Obe.* Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania.

Tita. What, jealous Oberon! Fairies, skip hence:
I have forsworn his bed and company.

Obe. Tarry, rash wanton! Am not I thy lord?

Tita. Then I must be thy lady; but I know
65 When thou hast stolen away from fairy land,
And in the shape of Corin sat all day,
Playing on pipes of corn and versing love
To amorous Phillida. Why art thou here,
Come from the farthest steep of India?
70 But that, forsooth, the bouncing Amazon,
Your buskin'd mistress and your warrior love,
To Theseus must be wedded, and you come
To give their bed joy and prosperity.

Obe. How canst thou thus for shame, Titania,

Glance at my credit with Hippolyta, 75
Knowing I know thy love to Theseus?
Didst thou not lead him through the glimmering night
From Perigenia, whom he ravished?
And make him with fair Ægle break his faith,
With Ariadne, and Antiopa? 80

Tita. These are the forgeries of jealousy;
And never, since the middle summer's spring,
Met we on hill, in dale, forest or mead,
By paved fountain or by rushy brook,
Or in the beached margent of the sea, 85
To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,
But with thy brawls thou hast disturb'd our sport.
Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain,
As in revenge, hath suck'd up from the sea
Contagious fogs; which, falling in the land, 90
Have every petty river made so proud
That they have overborne their continents.
The ox hath therefore stretch'd his yoke in vain,
The ploughman lost his sweat, and the green corn
Hath rotted ere his youth attain'd a beard. 95
The fold stands empty in the drowned field,
And crows are fatted with the murrain flock,
The nine men's morris is fill'd up with mud,
And the quaint mazes in the wanton green
For lack of tread are undistinguishable. 100
The human mortals want their winter cheer;
No night is now with hymn or carol blest;
Therefore the moon, the governess of floods,

Pale in her anger, washes all the air,
105 That rheumatic diseases do abound.
And thorough this distemperature we see
The seasons alter: hoary-headed frosts
Fall in the fresh lap of the crimson rose,
And on old Hiems' thin and icy crown
110 An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds
Is, as in mockery, set; the spring, the summer,
The childing autumn, angry winter, change
Their wonted liveries; and the mazed world,
By their increase, now knows not which is which.
115 And this same progeny of evils comes
From our debate, from our dissension;
We are their parents and original.

Obe. Do you amend it then; it lies in you.
Why should Titania cross her Oberon?
120 I do but beg a little changeling boy
To be my henchman.

Tita. Set your heart at rest;
The fairy land buys not the child of me.
His mother was a votaress of my order,
And, in the spiced Indian air, by night,
125 Full often hath she gossip'd by my side,
And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands,
Marking the embarked traders on the flood,
When we have laugh'd to see the sails conceive
And grow big-bellied with the wanton wind;
130 Which she with pretty and with swimming gait
Following, her womb then rich with my young squire
Would imitate, and sail upon the land

To fetch me trifles, and return again,
As from a voyage, rich with merchandise.
But she, being mortal, of that boy did die; 135
And for her sake do I rear up her boy,
And for her sake I will not part with him.

Obe. How long within this wood intend you stay?

Tita. Perchance till after Theseus' wedding-day.
If you will patiently dance in our round 140
And see our moonlight revels, go with us;
If not, shun me, and I will spare your haunts.

Obe. Give me that boy, and I will go with thee.

Tita. Not for thy fairy kingdom. Fairies, away!
We shall chide downright, if I longer stay. 145

[*Exit* [*Titania with her train*].

Obe. Well, go thy way; thou shalt not from this grove
Till I torment thee for this injury.
My gentle Puck, come hither. Thou rememb'rest
Since once I sat upon a promontory,
And heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back 150
Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath
That the rude sea grew civil at her song,
And certain stars shot madly from their spheres,
To hear the sea-maid's music?

Robin. I remember.

Obe. That very time I saw, but thou couldst not, 155
Flying between the cold moon and the earth,
Cupid all arm'd. A certain aim he took
At a fair vestal throned by the west,
And loos'd his love-shaft smartly from his bow,

160 As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts;
But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft
Quench'd in the chaste beams of the watery moon,
And the imperial votaress passed on,
In maiden meditation, fancy-free.
165 Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell.
It fell upon a little western flower,
Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound.
And maidens call it love-in-idleness.
Fetch me that flower, the herb I shew'd thee once.
170 The juice of it on sleeping eye-lids laid
Will make or man or woman madly dote
Upon the next live creature that it sees.
Fetch me this herb; and be thou here again
Ere the leviathan can swim a league.
175 *Robin*. I'll put a girdle round about the earth
In forty minutes. [*Exit*.]

Obe. Having once this juice,
I'll watch Titania when she is asleep,
And drop the liquor of it in her eyes.
The next thing then she waking looks upon,
180 Be it on lion, bear, or wolf, or bull,
On meddling monkey, or on busy ape,
She shall pursue it with the soul of love;
And ere I take this charm from off her sight,
As I can take it with another herb,
185 I'll make her render up her page to me.
But who comes here? I am invisible;
And I will overhear their conference.

Enter DEMETRIUS, HELENA *following him.*

Dem. I love thee not, therefore pursue me not.
Where is Lysander and fair Hermia?
The one I'll stay, the other stayeth me. 190
Thou told'st me they were stolen unto this wood;
And here am I, and wood within this wood,
Because I cannot meet my Hermia.
Hence, get thee gone, and follow me no more.
Hel. You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant; 195
But yet you draw not iron, for my heart
Is true as steel. Leave you your power to draw,
And I shall have no power to follow you.
Dem. Do I entice you? Do I speak you fair?
Or, rather, do I not in plainest truth 200
Tell you, I do not, nor I cannot love you?
Hel. And even for that do I love you the more.
I am your spaniel, and, Demetrius,
The more you beat me, I will fawn on you.
Use me but as your spaniel, spurn me, strike me, 205
Neglect me, lose me; only give me leave,
Unworthy as I am to follow you.
What worser place can I beg in your love,—
And yet a place of high respect with me,—
Than to be used as you use your dog? 210
Dem. Tempt not too much the hatred of my spirit,
For I am sick when I do look on thee.
Hel. And I am sick when I look not on you.
Dem. You do impeach your modesty too much,
To leave the city and commit yourself 215

Into the hands of one that loves you not;
To trust the opportunity of night
And the ill counsel of a desert place
With the rich worth of your virginity.

220 *Hel.* Your virtue is my privilege. For that
It is not night when I do see your face,
Therefore I think I am not in the night;
Nor doth this wood lack worlds of company,
For you in my respect are all the world.
225 Then how can it be said I am alone,
When all the world is here to look on me?

Dem. I'll run from thee and hide me in the brakes,
And leave thee to the mercy of wild beasts.

Hel. The wildest hath not such a heart as you.
230 Run when you will, the story shall be chang'd:
Apollo flies, and Daphne holds the chase;
The dove pursues the griffin; the mild hind
Makes speed to catch the tiger; bootless speed,
When cowardice pursues and valour flies.

235 *Dem.* I will not stay thy questions; let me go;
Or, if thou follow me, do not believe
But I shall do thee mischief in the wood.

Hel. Ay, in the temple, in the town, the field,
You do me mischief. Fie, Demetrius!
240 Your wrongs do set a scandal on my sex.
We cannot fight for love, as men may do.
We should be woo'd and were not made to woo.
[*Exit Dem.*]
I'll follow thee and make a heaven of hell,
To die upon the hand I love so well. [*Exit.*

Obe. Fare thee well, nymph. Ere he do leave this grove,, 245
Thou shalt fly him and he shall seek thy love.

Re-enter [ROBIN GOODFELLOW].

Hast thou the flower there? Welcome, wanderer.
Robin. Ay, there it is.
Obe. I pray thee, give it me.
I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows, 250
Quite over-canopi'd with luscious woodbine,
With sweet musk-roses and with eglantine.
There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,
Lull'd in these flowers with dances and delight;
And there the snake throws her enamell'd skin, 255
Weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in;
And with the juice of this I'll streak her eyes,
And make her full of hateful fantasies.
Take thou some of it, and seek through this grove.
A sweet Athenian lady is in love 260
With a disdainful youth. Anoint his eyes,
But do it when the next thing he espies
May be the lady. Thou shalt know the man
By the Athenian garments he hath on.
Effect it with some care, that he may prove 265
More fond on her than she upon her love;
And look thou meet me ere the first cock crow.
Robin. Fear not, my lord, your servant shall do so.
[*Exeunt.*

[SCENE II. *Another part of the wood.*]

Enter TITANIA, *with her train.*

Tita. Come, now a roundel and a fairy song;
Then, for the third part of a minute, hence;
Some to kill cankers in the musk-rose buds,
Some war with rere-mice for their leathern wings
5 To make my small elves coats, and some keep back
The clamorous owl that nightly hoots and wonders
At our quaint spirits. Sing me now asleep;
Then to your offices and let me rest.

THE FAIRIES *sing.*

[*1. Fairy.*] "You spotted snakes with double tongue,
10 Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen;
Newts and blind-worms, do no wrong,
Come not near our fairy queen."

[*Cho.*] "Philomel, with melody
Sing in our sweet lullaby;
15 Lulla, lulla, lullaby; lulla, lulla, lullaby.
Never harm,
Nor spell nor charm,
Come our lovely lady nigh.
So, good night, with lullaby."

1. Fairy. "Weaving spiders, come not here; 20
Hence, you long-legg'd spinners, hence!
Beetles black, approach not near;
Worm nor snail, do no offence."

[*Cho.*] "Philomel, with melody," etc.

2. Fairy. Hence, away! now all is well. 25
One aloof stand sentinel.
[*Exeunt Fairies.*] *Titania sleeps.*

Enter OBERON [*and squeezes the flower on Titania's eyelids*].

Obe. What thou seest when thou dost wake,
Do it for thy true-love take,
Love and languish for his sake.
Be it ounce, or cat, or bear, 30
Pard, or boar with bristled hair,
In thy eye that shall appear
When thou wak'st, it is thy dear.
Wake when some vile thing is near.
[*Exit.*]

Enter LYSANDER *and* HERMIA.

Lys. Fair love, you faint with wandering in the wood; 35
And to speak troth, I have forgot our way.
We'll rest us, Hermia, if you think it good,
And tarry for the comfort of the day.
Her. Be it so, Lysander. Find you out a bed;
For I upon this bank will rest my head. 40

Lys. One turf shall serve as pillow for us both;
One heart, one bed, two bosoms and one troth.

Her. Nay, good Lysander; for my sake, my dear,
Lie further off yet; do not lie so near.

45 *Lys.* O, take the sense, sweet, of my innocence!
Love takes the meaning in love's conference,
I mean, that my heart unto yours is knit
So that but one heart we can make of it;
Two bosoms interchained with an oath;
50 So then two bosoms and a single troth.
Then by your side no bed-room me deny;
For lying so, Hermia, I do not lie.

Her. Lysander riddles very prettily.
Now much beshrew my manners and my pride,
55 If Hermia meant to say Lysander lied.
But, gentle friend, for love and courtesy
Lie further off; in human modesty,
Such separation as may well be said
Becomes a virtuous bachelor and a maid,
60 So far be distant; and, good night, sweet friend.
Thy love ne'er alter till thy sweet life end!

Lys. Amen, amen, to that fair prayer, say I;
And then end life when I end loyalty!
Here is my bed; sleep give thee all his rest!

65 *Her.* With half that wish the wisher's eyes be press'd! [*They sleep.*

Enter [Robin Goodfellow].

Robin. Through the forest have I gone,
But Athenian found I none,

On whose eyes I might approve
This flower's force in stirring love.
Night and silence—Who is here? 70
Weeds of Athens he doth wear!
This is he, my master said,
Despised the Athenian maid;
And here the maiden, sleeping sound,
On the dank and dirty ground. 75
Pretty soul! she durst not lie
Near this lack-love kill-courtesy.
Churl, upon thy eyes I throw
All the power this charm doth owe.
When thou wak'st, let love forbid 80
Sleep his seat on thy eyelid;
So awake when I am gone,
For I must now to Oberon.

[*Exit.*

Enter DEMETRIUS *and* HELENA, *running.*

Hel. Stay though thou kill me, sweet Demetrius.
Dem. I charge thee, hence, and do not haunt me thus. 85
Hel. O, wilt thou darkling leave me? Do not so.
Dem. Stay, on thy peril; I alone will go.

[*Exit.*

Hel. O, I am out of breath in this fond chase!
The more my prayer, the lesser is my grace.
Happy is Hermia, wheresoe'er she lies, 90
For she hath blessed and attractive eyes.
How came her eyes so bright? Not with salt tears;

If so, my eyes are oftener wash'd than hers.
No, no, I am as ugly as a bear,
95 For beasts that meet me run away for fear;
Therefore no marvel though Demetrius
Do, as a monster, fly my presence thus.
What wicked and dissembling glass of mine
Made me compare with Hermia's sphery eyne?
100 But who is here? Lysander! on the ground!
Dead? or asleep? I see no blood, no wound.
Lysander, if you live, good sir, awake.

Lys. [*Awaking.*] And run through fire I will for thy sweet sake.
Transparent Helena! Nature shows art,
105 That through thy bosom makes me see thy heart.
Where is Demetrius? O, how fit a word
Is that vile name to perish on my sword!

Hel. Do not say so, Lysander; say not so.
What though he love your Hermia? Lord, what though?
110 Yet Hermia still loves you; then be content.

Lys. Content with Hermia! No; I do repent
The tedious minutes I with her have spent.
Not Hermia but Helena I love.
Who will not change a raven for a dove?
115 The will of man is by his reason sway'd;
And reason says you are the worthier maid.
Things growing are not ripe until their season,
So I, being young, till now ripe not to reason;
And touching now the point of human skill,
120 Reason becomes the marshal to my will

And leads me to your eyes, where I o'erlook
Love's stories written in love's richest book.
Hel. Wherefore was I to this keen mockery born?
When at your hands did I deserve this scorn?
Is 't not enough, is 't not enough, young man, 125
That I did never, no, nor never can,
Deserve a sweet look from Demetrius' eye,
But you must flout my insufficiency?
Good troth, you do me wrong, good sooth you do.
In such disdainful manner me to woo. 130
But fare you well; perforce I must confess
I thought you lord of more true gentleness.
O, that a lady, of one man refus'd,
Should of another therefore be abus'd! [*Exit.*

Lys. She sees not Hermia. Hermia, sleep thou there; 135
And never mayst thou come Lysander near!
For as a surfeit of the sweetest things
The deepest loathing to the stomach brings,
Or as the heresies that men do leave
Are hated most of those they did deceive, 140
So thou, my surfeit and my heresy,
Of all be hated, but the most of me!
And, all my powers, address your love and might
To honour Helen and to be her knight. [*Exit.*

Her. [*Awaking.*] Help me, Lysander, help me! do thy best 145
To pluck this crawling serpent from my breast!

Ay me, for pity! what a dream was here!
Lysander, look how I do quake with fear.
Methought a serpent eat my heart away,
150 And you sat smiling at his cruel prey.
Lysander! what, remov'd? Lysander! lord!
What, out of hearing? Gone? No sound, no word?
Alack, where are you? Speak, an if you hear;
Speak, of all loves! I swoon almost with fear.
155 No? then I well perceive you are not nigh.
Either death or you I'll find immediately.

[*Exit.*

ACT III.

[SCENE I. *The wood. Titania lying asleep.*]

Enter the clowns [QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT *and* STARVELING].

Bot. Are we all met?

Quin. Pat, pat; and here's a marvellous convenient place for our rehearsal. This green plot shall be our stage, this hawthorn-brake our tiring-house; and we will do it in action as we will do it 5 before the Duke.

Bot. Peter Quince!

Quin. What say'st thou, bully Bottom?

Bot. There are things in this comedy of Pyramus and Thisby that will never please. First Pyramus 10 must draw a sword to kill himself, which the ladies cannot abide. How answer you that?

Snout. By 'r lakin, a parlous fear.

Star. I believe we must leave the killing out, when all is done. 15

Bot. Not a whit! I have a device to make all well. Write me a prologue; and let the prologue seem to say, we will do no harm with our swords and that Pyramus is not kill'd indeed; and, for the more

20 better assurance, tell them that I Pyramus am not Pyramus, but Bottom the weaver. This will put them out of fear.

Quin. Well, we will have such a prologue; and it shall be written in eight and six.

25 *Bot.* No, make it two more; let it be written in eight and eight.

Snout. Will not the ladies be afeard of the lion?

Star. I fear it, I promise you.

Bot. Masters, you ought to consider with your-
30 selves. To bring in—God shield us!—a lion among ladies, is a most dreadful thing; for there is not a more fearful wild-fowl than your lion living; and we ought to look to 't.

Snout. Therefore another prologue must tell he
35 is not a lion.

Bot. Nay, you must name his name, and half his face must be seen through the lion's neck; and he himself must speak through, saying thus, or to the same defect, "Ladies," or "Fair ladies, I would wish
40 you," or "I would request you," or "I would entreat you, not to fear, not to tremble: my life for yours. If you think I come hither as a lion, it were pity of my life. No, I am no such thing; I am a man as other men are;" and there indeed let him name his
45 name, and tell them plainly he is Snug the joiner.

Quin. Well, it shall be so. But there is two hard things; that is, to bring the moonlight into a chamber; for, you know, Pyramus and Thisby meet by moonlight.

Snout. Doth the moon shine that night we play 50
our play?

Bot. A calendar, a calendar! Look in the almanac! Find out moonshine, find out moonshine.

Quin. Yes, it doth shine that night.

Bot. Why, then may you leave a casement of the 55
great chamber window, where we play, open, and the moon may shine in at the casement.

Quin. Ay; or else one must come in with a bush of thorns and a lantern, and say he comes to disfigure, or to present, the person of Moonshine. Then, there 60
is another thing: we must have a wall in the great chamber; for Pyramus and Thisby, says the story, did talk through the chink of a wall.

Snout. You can never bring in a wall. What say you, Bottom? 65

Bot. Some man or other must present Wall; and let him have some plaster, or some loam, or some rough-cast about him, to signify wall; or let him hold his fingers thus, and through that cranny shall Pyramus and Thisby whisper. 70

Quin. If that may be, then all is well. Come, sit down, every mother's son, and rehearse your parts. Pyramus, you begin. When you have spoken your speech, enter into that brake. And so every one according to his cue. 75

Enter ROBIN GOODFELLOW [*behind*].

Robin. What hempen home-spuns have we swaggering here,

So near the cradle of the fairy queen?
What, a play toward! I'll be an auditor;
An actor too perhaps, if I see cause.

80 *Quin.* Speak, Pyramus. Thisby, stand forth.

Bot. "Thisby, the flowers of odious savours sweet,"—

Quin. Odorous, odorous.

Bot. ——"odours savours sweet;
So hath thy breath, my dearest Thisby dear.
85 But hark, a voice! Stay thou but here awhile,
And by and by I will to thee appear."

[*Exit.*

Robin. A stranger Pyramus than e'er play'd here.

[*Exit*].

Flu. Must I speak now?

Quin. Ay, marry, must you; for you must under-
90 stand he goes but to see a noise that he heard, and is
to come again.

Flu. "Most radiant Pyramus, most lily-white of hue,
Of colour like the red rose on triumphant brier,
Most brisky juvenal and eke most lovely Jew,
95 As true as truest horse that yet would never tire,
I'll meet thee, Pyramus, at Ninny's tomb."

Quin. "Ninus' tomb," man. Why, you must not
speak that yet; that you answer to Pyramus. You
speak all your part at once, cues and all. Pyramus
100 enter. Your cue is past; it is "never tire."

Flu. O,—"As true as truest horse, that yet would
never tire."

[*Re-enter* ROBIN GOODFELLOW, *and* BOTTOM *with an ass's head.*]

Bot. "If I were, fair Thisby, I were only thine."

Quin. O monstrous! O strange! We are haunted. Pray, masters! fly, masters! Help!

[*Exeunt* [*Quince, Snug, Flute, Snout, and Starveling*].

Robin. I'll follow you, I'll lead you about a round, 105
Through bog, through bush, through brake, through brier.
Sometime a horse I'll be, sometime a hound,
A hog, a headless bear, sometime a fire;
And neigh, and bark, and grunt, and roar, and burn,
Like horse, hound, hog, bear, fire, at every turn. 110

[*Exit.*

Bot. Why do they run away? This is a knavery of them to make me afeard.

Re-enter SNOUT.

Snout. O Bottom, thou art chang'd! What do I see on thee?

Bot. What do you see? You see an ass-head of 115 your own, do you? [*Exit Snout.*]

Re-enter QUINCE.

Quin. Bless thee, Bottom! bless thee! thou art translated.

[*Exit.*

Bot. I see their knavery; this is to make an ass

120 of me, to fright me, if they could. But I will not stir from this place, do what they can. I will walk up and down here, and I will sing, that they shall hear I am not afraid. [*Sings.*]

"The ousel cock so black of hue,
125 With orange-tawny bill,
The throstle with his note so true,
The wren with little quill,"—

Tita. [*Awaking.*] What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?

Bot. [*Sings.*]

"The finch, the sparrow, and the lark,
130 The plain-song cuckoo gray,
Whose note full many a man doth mark,
And dares not answer nay;"—

for, indeed, who would set his wit to so foolish a bird? Who would give a bird the lie, though he cry
135 "cuckoo" never so?

Tita. I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again.
Mine ear is much enamour'd of thy note;
So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape;
And thy fair virtues, force perforce, doth move me
140 On the first view to say, to swear, I love thee.

Bot. Methinks, mistress, you should have little reason for that; and yet, to say the truth, reason and love keep little company together now-a-days; the more the pity that some honest neighbours will not
145 make them friends. Nay, I can gleek upon occasion.

Tita. Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful.

Bot. Not so, neither; but if I had wit enough to

get out of this wood, I have enough to serve mine own turn.

Tita. Out of this wood do not desire to go; 150
Thou shalt remain here, whether thou wilt or no.
I am a spirit of no common rate;
The summer still doth tend upon my state;
And I do love thee; therefore, go with me.
I'll give thee fairies to attend on thee, 155
And they shall fetch thee jewels from the deep,
And sing while thou on pressed flowers dost sleep.
And I will purge thy mortal grossness so
That thou shalt like an airy spirit go.
Peaseblossom! Cobweb! Moth! and Mustardseed! 160

Enter PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH, *and* MUSTARDSEED.

Peas. Ready.
Cob. And I.
Moth. And I.
Mus. And I.
All. Where shall we go?
Tita. Be kind and courteous to this gentleman.
Hop in his walks and gambol in his eyes;
Feed him with apricocks and dewberries,
With purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries;
The honey-bags steal from the humble-bees,
And for night-tapers crop their waxen thighs
And light them at the fiery glow-worm's eyes,
To have my love to bed and to arise;

170 And pluck the wings from painted butterflies
To fan the moonbeams from his sleeping eyes.
Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies.

Peas. Hail, mortal!

Cob. Hail!

175 *Moth.* Hail!

Mus. Hail!

Bot. I cry your worships mercy, heartily. I beseech your worship's name.

Cob. Cobweb.

180 *Bot.* I shall desire you of more acquaintance, good Master Cobweb. If I cut my finger, I shall make bold with you. Your name, honest gentleman?

Peas. Peaseblossom.

Bot. I pray you commend me to Mistress Squash, 185 your mother, and to Master Peascod, your father. Good Master Peaseblossom, I shall desire you of more acquaintance too. Your name, I beseech you, sir?

Mus. Mustardseed.

190 *Bot.* Good Master Mustardseed, I know your patience well. That same cowardly, giant-like ox-beef hath devoured many a gentleman of your house. I promise you your kindred hath made my eyes water ere now. I desire you more acquaintance, good 195 Master Mustardseed.

Tita. Come, wait upon him; lead him to my bower.
The moon methinks looks with a watery eye,
And when she weeps, weeps every little flower,

Lamenting some enforced chastity.
Tie up my love's tongue, bring him silently. 200
[*Exeunt.*

[SCENE II. *Another part of the wood.*]

Enter OBERON.

Obe. I wonder if Titania be awak'd;
Then, what it was that next came in her eye,
Which she must dote on in extremity.

Enter ROBIN GOODFELLOW.

Here comes my messenger.
How now, mad spirit!
What night-rule now about this haunted grove? 5
Robin. My mistress with a monster is in love.
Near to her close and consecrated bower,
While she was in her dull and sleeping hour,
A crew of patches, rude mechanicals,
That work for bread upon Athenian stalls, 10
Were met together to rehearse a play
Intended for great Theseus' nuptial-day.
The shallowest thickskin of that barren sort,
Who Pyramus presented in their sport,
Forsook his scene and ent'red in a brake. 15
When I did him at this advantage take,
An ass's nole I fixed on his head.
Anon his Thisby must be answered,

And forth my mimic comes. When they him spy,
20 As wild geese that the creeping fowler eye,
Or russet-pated choughs, many in sort,
Rising and cawing at the gun's report,
Sever themselves and madly sweep the sky,
So, at his sight, away his fellows fly;
25 And, at our stamp, here o'er and o'er one falls;
He murder cries, and help from Athens calls.
Their sense thus weak, lost with their fears thus strong,
Made senseless things begin to do them wrong;
For briers and thorns at their apparel snatch;
Some sleeves, some hats, from yielders all things
30 catch.
I led them on in this distracted fear,
And left sweet Pyramus translated there;
When in that moment, so it came to pass,
Titania wak'd and straightway lov'd an ass.
35 *Obe.* This falls out better than I could devise.
But hast thou yet latch'd the Athenian's eyes
With the love-juice, as I did bid thee do?
Robin. I took him sleeping,—that is finish'd too,—
And the Athenian woman by his side;
40 That, when he wak'd, of force she must be ey'd.

Enter DEMETRIUS *and* HERMIA.

Obe. Stand close; this is the same Athenian.
Robin. This is the woman, but not this the man.
Dem. O, why rebuke you him that loves you so?
Lay breath so bitter on your bitter foe.

Her. Now I but chide; but I should use thee
worse, 45
For thou, I fear, hast given me cause to curse.
If thou hast slain Lysander in his sleep,
Being o'er shoes in blood, plunge in knee-deep,
And kill me too.
The sun was not so true unto the day 50
As he to me: would he have stolen away
From sleeping Hermia? I'll believe as soon
This whole earth may be bor'd and that the moon
May through the center creep and so displease
Her brother's noontide with the Antipodes. 55
It cannot be but thou hast murd'red him;
So should a murderer look, so dread, so grim.

Dem. So should the murdered look, and so should I,
Pierc'd through the heart with your stern cruelty;
Yet you, the murderer, look as bright, as clear, 60
As yonder Venus in her glimmering sphere.

Her. What 's this to my Lysander? Where is he?
Ah, good Demetrius, wilt thou give him me?

Dem. I had rather give his carcass to my hounds.

Her. Out, dog! out, cur! thou driv'st me past
the bounds 65
Of maiden's patience. Hast thou slain him, then?
Henceforth be never numb'red among men!
O, once tell true, tell true, even for my sake!
Durst thou have look'd upon him being awake,
And hast thou kill'd him sleeping? O brave touch! 70
Could not a worm, an adder, do so much?
An adder did it; for with doubler tongue

Than thine, thou serpent, never adder stung.
Dem. You spend your passion on a mispris'd mood.
75 I am not guilty of Lysander's blood;
Nor is he dead, for aught that I can tell.
Her. I pray thee, tell me then that he is well.
Dem. An if I could, what should I get therefore?
Her. A privilege never to see me more.
80 And from thy hated presence part I so:
See me no more, whether he be dead or no.
[*Exit.*
Dem. There is no following her in this fierce vein;
Here therefore for a while I will remain.
So sorrow's heaviness doth heavier grow
85 For debt that bankrupt sleep doth sorrow owe;
Which now in some slight measure it will pay,
If for his tender here I make some stay.
[*Lies down* [*and sleeps*].
Obe. What hast thou done? Thou hast mistaken quite
And laid the love-juice on some true-love's sight.
90 Of thy misprision must perforce ensue
Some true love turn'd and not a false turn'd true.
Robin. Then fate o'er-rules, that, one man holding troth,
A million fail, confounding oath on oath.
Obe. About the wood go swifter than the wind
95 And Helena of Athens look thou find.
All fancy-sick she is and pale of cheer
With sighs of love, that costs the fresh blood dear.
By some illusion see thou bring her here.

I'll charm his eyes against she do appear.

Robin. I go, I go; look how I go, 100
Swifter than arrow from the Tartar's bow.

[*Exit.*

Obe. Flower of this purple dye
Hit with Cupid's archery,
Sink in apple of his eye.
When his love he doth espy, 105
Let her shine as gloriously
As the Venus of the sky.
When thou wak'st, if she be by,
Beg of her for remedy.

Re-enter ROBIN GOODFELLOW.

Robin. Captain of our fairy band, 110
Helena is here at hand;
And the youth, mistook by me,
Pleading for a lover's fee.
Shall we their fond pageant see?
Lord, what fools these mortals be! 115

Obe. Stand aside. The noise they make
Will cause Demetrius to awake.

Robin. Then will two at once woo one;
That must needs be sport alone.
And those things do best please me 120
That befall preposterously.

Enter LYSANDER *and* HELENA.

Lys. Why should you think that I should woo in scorn?

Scorn and derision never come in tears.
Look, when I vow, I weep; and vows so born,
125 In their nativity all truth appears.
How can these things in me seem scorn to you,
Bearing the badge of faith, to prove them true?
Hel. You do advance your cunning more and more.
When truth kills truth, O devilish-holy fray!
130 These vows are Hermia's; will you give her o'er?
Weigh oath with oath, and you will nothing weigh.
Your vows to her and me, put in two scales,
Will even weigh, and both as light as tales.
Lys. I had no judgment when to her I swore.
135 *Hel.* Nor none, in my mind, now you give her o'er.
Lys. Demetrius loves her, and he loves not you.
Dem. [*Awaking.*] O Helen, goddess, nymph, perfect, divine!
To what, my love, shall I compare thine eyne?
Crystal is muddy. O, how ripe in show
140 Thy lips, those kissing cherries, tempting grow!
That pure congealed white, high Taurus' snow,
Fann'd with the eastern wind, turns to a crow
When thou hold'st up thy hand. O, let me kiss
This princess of pure white, this seal of bliss!
145 *Hel.* O spite! O hell! I see you all are bent
To set against me for your merriment.
If you were civil and knew courtesy,
You would not do me thus much injury.
Can you not hate me, as I know you do,
150 But you must join in souls to mock me too?
If you were men, as men you are in show,

You would not use a gentle lady so;
To vow, and swear, and superpraise my parts,
When I am sure you hate me with your hearts.
You both are rivals, and love Hermia; 155
And now both rivals, to mock Helena.
A trim exploit, a manly enterprise,
To conjure tears up in a poor maid's eyes
With your derision! None of noble sort
Would so offend a virgin and extort 160
A poor soul's patience, all to make you sport.

Lys. You are unkind, Demetrius; be not so;
For you love Hermia; this you know I know.
And here, with all good will, with all my heart,
In Hermia's love, I yield you up my part; 165
And yours of Helena to me bequeath,
Whom I do love and will do till my death.

Hel. Never did mockers waste more idle breath.

Dem. Lysander, keep thy Hermia; I will none.
If e'er I lov'd her, all that love is gone. 170
My heart to her but as guest-wise sojourn'd,
And now to Helen is it home return'd,
There to remain.

Lys. Helen, it is not so.

Dem. Disparage not the faith thou dost not know,
Lest, to thy peril, thou aby it dear. 175
Look, where thy love comes; yonder is thy dear.

Re-enter HERMIA.

Her. Dark night, that from the eye his function
takes,

The ear more quick of apprehension makes;
Wherein it doth impair the seeing sense,
180 It pays the hearing double recompense.
Thou art not by mine eye, Lysander, found;
Mine ear, I thank it, brought me to thy sound.
But why unkindly didst thou leave me so?

Lys. Why should he stay, whom love doth press to go?

Her. What love could press Lysander from my
185 side?

Lys. Lysander's love, that would not let him bide,
Fair Helena, who more engilds the night
Than all yon fiery oes and eyes of light.
Why seek'st thou me? Could not this make thee know,
190 The hate I bare thee made me leave thee so?

Her. You speak not as you think. It cannot be.

Hel. Lo, she is one of this confederacy!
Now I perceive they have conjoin'd all three
To fashion this false sport, in spite of me.
195 Injurious Hermia! most ungrateful maid!
Have you conspir'd, have you with these contriv'd
To bait me with this foul derision?
Is all the counsel that we two have shar'd,
The sisters' vows, the hours that we have spent,
200 When we have chid the hasty-footed time
For parting us,—O, is all forgot?
All school-days' friendship, childhood innocence?
We, Hermia, like two artificial gods,
Have with our needles created both one flower,

Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion, 205
Both warbling of one song, both in one key,
As if our hands, our sides, voices and minds,
Had been incorporate. So we grew together,
Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,
But yet an union in partition; 210
Two lovely berries moulded on one stem;
So with two seeming bodies, but one heart;
Two of the first, like coats in heraldry,
Due but to one and crowned with one crest.
And will you rend our ancient love asunder, 215
To join with men in scorning your poor friend?
It is not friendly, 't is not maidenly.
Our sex as well as I, may chide you for it,
Though I alone do feel the injury.

Her. I am amazed at your passionate words. 220
I scorn you not; it seems that you scorn me.

Hel. Have you not set Lysander, as in scorn,
To follow me and praise my eyes and face?
And made your other love, Demetrius,
Who even but now did spurn me with his foot, 225
To call me goddess, nymph, divine and rare,
Precious, celestial? Wherefore speaks he this
To her he hates? And wherefore doth Lysander
Deny your love, so rich within his soul,
And tender me, forsooth, affection, 230
But by your setting on, by your consent?
What though I be not so in grace as you,
So hung upon with love, so fortunate,
But miserable most, to love unlov'd?

235 This you should pity rather than despise.

Her. I understand not what you mean by this.

Hel. Ay, do, persever, counterfeit sad looks,
Make mouths upon me when I turn my back,
Wink each at other, hold the sweet jest up;
240 This sport, well carried, shall be chronicled.
If you have any pity, grace, or manners,
You would not make me such an argument.
But fare ye well; 't is partly my own fault,
Which death or absence soon shall remedy.

245 *Lys.* Stay, gentle Helena; hear my excuse,
My love, my life, my soul, fair Helena!

Hel. O excellent!

Her. Sweet, do not scorn her so.

Dem. If she cannot entreat, I can compel.

Lys. Thou canst compel no more than she entreat.
Thy threats have no more strength than her weak
250 prayers.
Helen, I love thee; by my life, I do!
I swear by that which I will lose for thee,
To prove him false that says I love thee not.

Dem. I say I love thee more than he can do.

255 *Lys.* If thou say so, withdraw, and prove it too.

Dem. Quick, come!

Her. Lysander, whereto tends all this?

Lys. Away, you Ethiope!

Dem. No, no; he'll [but]
Seem to break loose. Take on as you would follow,
But yet come not. You are a tame man, go!

Lys. Hang off, thou cat, thou burr! Vile thing, let loose, 260
Or I will shake thee from me like a serpent!
Her. Why are you grown so rude? What change is this?
Sweet love,—
Lys. Thy love! Out, tawny Tartar, out!
Out, loathed medicine! O hated potion, hence!
Her. Do you not jest?
Hel. Yes, sooth; and so do you. 265
Lys. Demetrius, I will keep my word with thee.
Dem. I would I had your bond, for I perceive
A weak bond holds you. I'll not trust your word.
Lys. What, should I hurt her, strike her, kill her dead?
Although I hate her, I'll not harm her so. 270
Her. What, can you do me greater harm than hate?
Hate me! wherefore? O me! what news, my love!
Am not I Hermia? Are not you Lysander?
I am as fair now as I was erewhile.
Since night you lov'd me; yet since night you left me: 275
Why, then you left me—O, the gods forbid!—
In earnest, shall I say?
Lys. Ay, by my life;
And never did desire to see thee more.
Therefore be out of hope, of question, doubt;
Be certain, nothing truer; 't is no jest 280
That I do hate thee and love Helena.
Her. O me! you juggler! you canker-blossom!

You thief of love! What, have you come by night
And stolen my love's heart from him?
Hel. Fine, i' faith!
285 Have you no modesty, no maiden shame,
No touch of bashfulness? What, will you tear
Impatient answers from my gentle tongue?
Fie, fie! you counterfeit, you puppet, you!
Her. Puppet? Why so? Ay, that way goes the game.
290 Now I perceive that she hath made compare
Between our statures; she hath urg'd her height;
And with her personage, her tall personage,
Her height, forsooth, she hath prevail'd with him.
And are you grown so high in his esteem,
295 Because I am so dwarfish and so low?
How low am I, thou painted maypole? Speak,
How low am I? I am not yet so low
But that my nails can reach unto thine eyes.
Hel. I pray you, though you mock me, gentlemen,
300 Let her not hurt me. I was never curst;
I have no gift at all in shrewishness;
I am a right maid for my cowardice.
Let her not strike me. You perhaps may think,
Because she is something lower than myself,
That I can match her.
305 *Her.* Lower! hark, again.
Hel. Good Hermia, do not be so bitter with me.
I evermore did love you, Hermia,
Did ever keep your counsels, never wrong'd you;
Save that, in love unto Demetrius,

I told him of your stealth unto this wood. 310
He followed you; for love I followed him;
But he hath chid me hence and threat'ned me
To strike me, spurn me, nay, to kill me too.
And now, so you will let me quiet go,
To Athens will I bear my folly back 315
And follow you no further. Let me go.
You see how simple and how fond I am.

Her. Why, get you gone; who is 't that hinders you?

Hel. A foolish heart, that I leave here behind.

Her. What, with Lysander?

Hel. With Demetrius. 320

Lys. Be not afraid; she shall not harm thee, Helena.

Dem. No sir, she shall not, though you take her part.

Hel. O, when she 's angry, she is keen and shrewd!
She was a vixen when she went to school;
And though she be but little, she is fierce. 325

Her. Little again! Nothing but low and little!
Why will you suffer her to flout me thus?
Let me come to her.

Lys. Get you gone, you dwarf,
You minimus, of hindering knot-grass made;
You bead, you acorn.

Dem. You are too officious 330
In her behalf that scorns your services.
Let her alone; speak not of Helena;
Take not her part; for, if thou dost intend

Never so little show of love to her,
Thou shalt aby it.

335 *Lys.* Now she holds me not.
Now follow, if thou dar'st, to try whose right,
Of thine or mine, is most in Helena.

Dem. Follow! Nay, I'll go with thee, cheek by jowl.

[*Exeunt Lysander and Demetrius.*

Her. You, mistress, all this coil is 'long of you.
Nay, go not back.

340 *Hel.* I will not trust you, I,
Nor longer stay in your curst company.
Your hands than mine are quicker for a fray,
My legs are longer though, to run away.

[*Exit*].

Her. I am amaz'd, and know not what to say.

[*Exit.*

345 *Obe.* This is thy negligence. Still thou mistak'st,
Or else committ'st thy knaveries wilfully.

Robin. Believe me, king of shadows, I mistook.
Did not you tell me I should know the man
By the Athenian garments he had on?
350 And so far blameless proves my enterprise,
That I have 'nointed an Athenian's eyes;
And so far am I glad it so did sort,
As this their jangling I esteem a sport.

Obe. Thou see'st these lovers seek a place to fight;
355 Hie therefore, Robin, overcast the night.
The starry welkin cover thou anon
With drooping fog as black as Acheron,

And lead these testy rivals so astray
As one come not within another's way.
Like to Lysander sometime frame thy tongue, 360
Then stir Demetrius up with bitter wrong;
And sometime rail thou like Demetrius;
And from each other look thou lead them thus,
Till o'er their brows death-counterfeiting sleep
With leaden legs and batty wings doth creep. 365
Then crush this herb into Lysander's eye;
Whose liquor hath this virtuous property,
To take from thence all error with his might,
And make his eyeballs roll with wonted sight.
When they next wake, all this derision 370
Shall seem a dream and fruitless vision;
And back to Athens shall the lovers wend,
With league whose date till death shall never end.
Whiles I in this affair do thee employ,
I'll to my queen and beg her Indian boy; 375
And then I will her charmed eye release
From monster's view, and all things shall be peace.

Robin. My fairy lord, this must be done with haste,
For night's swift dragons cut the clouds full fast,
And yonder shines Aurora's harbinger, 380
At whose approach, ghosts, wandering here and there,
Troop home to churchyards. Damned spirits all,
That in crossways and floods have burial,
Already to their wormy beds are gone.
For fear lest day should look their shames upon, 385
They wilfully themselves exile from light

And must for aye consort with black-brow'd night.
Obe. But we are spirits of another sort.
I with the morning's love have oft made sport,
390 And, like a forester, the groves may tread,
Even till the eastern gate, all fiery-red,
Opening on Neptune with fair blessed beams,
Turns into yellow gold his salt green streams.
But, notwithstanding, haste, make no delay.
395 We may effect this business yet ere day.
[*Exit.*]

Robin. Up and down, up and down,
I will lead them up and down.
I am fear'd in field and town.
Goblin, lead them up and down.
400 Here comes one.

Re-enter LYSANDER.

Lys. Where art thou, proud Demetrius? Speak thou now.
Robin. Here, villain; drawn and ready. Where art thou?
Lys. I will be with thee straight.
Robin. Follow me, then,
To plainer ground.
[*Exit Lysander, as following the voice.*]

Re-enter DEMETRIUS.

Dem. Lysander, speak again!
405 Thou runaway, thou coward, art thou fled?
Speak! In some bush? Where dost thou hide thy head?

Robin. Thou coward, art thou bragging to the stars,
Telling the bushes that thou look'st for wars,
And wilt not come? Come, recreant; come, thou child,
I'll whip thee with a rod. He is defil'd 410
That draws a sword on thee.

Dem. Yea, art thou there?

Robin. Follow my voice. We'll try no manhood here. [*Exeunt.*

[*Re-enter* LYSANDER.]

Lys. He goes before me and still dares me on.
When I come where he calls, then he is gone.
The villain is much lighter-heel'd than I; 415
I followed fast, but faster he did fly,
That fallen am I in dark uneven way,
And here will rest me. Come, thou gentle day!
[*Lies down.*
For if but once thou show me thy grey light,
I'll find Demetrius and revenge this spite. 420
[*Sleeps.*]

Re-enter ROBIN GOODFELLOW *and* DEMETRIUS.

Robin. Ho, ho, ho! Coward, why com'st thou not?

Dem. Abide me, if thou dar'st; for well I wot
Thou runn'st before me, shifting every place,
And dar'st not stand, nor look me in the face.
Where art thou now?

425 *Robin.* Come hither; I am here.

Dem. Nay, then, thou mock'st me. Thou shalt buy this dear,
If ever I thy face by daylight see.
Now, go thy way. Faintness constraineth me
To measure out my length on this cold bed.
430 By day's approach look to be visited.

[*Lies down and sleeps*].

Re-enter HELENA.

Hel. O weary night, O long and tedious night,
Abate thy hours! Shine, comforts, from the east,
That I may back to Athens by daylight,
From these that my poor company detest:
435 And sleep, that sometimes shuts up sorrow's eye,
Steal me awhile from mine own company.

[*Lies down and*] *sleeps.*

Robin. Yet but three? Come one more;
Two of both kinds makes up four.
Here she comes, curst and sad:
440 Cupid is a knavish lad,
Thus to make poor females mad.

Re-enter HERMIA.

Her. Never so weary, never so in woe,
Bedabbled with the dew and torn with briers,
I can no further crawl, no further go;
445 My legs can keep no pace with my desires.
Here will I rest me till the break of day.
Heavens shield Lysander, if they mean a fray!

[*Lies down and sleeps.*]

Puck. On the ground
Sleep sound:
I 'll apply 450
To your eye,
Gentle lover, remedy.
[*Squeezing the juice on Lysander's eyes.*]
When thou wak'st,
Thou tak'st
True delight 455
In the sight
Of thy former lady's eye:
And the country proverb known,
That every man should take his own,
In your waking shall be shown: 460
Jack shall have Jill;
Nought shall go ill;
The man shall have his mare again, and all shall be
well. [*Exit.*]

ACT IV.

[SCENE I. *The same.* LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA, *and* HERMIA *lying asleep.*]

Enter TITANIA *and* CLOWN [BOTTOM; PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH, MUSTARDSEED,] *and* [*other*] *Fairies* [*attending*]; OBERON *behind* [*unseen*].

Tita. Come, sit thee down upon this flowery bed,
While I thy amiable cheeks do coy,
And stick musk-roses in thy sleek smooth head,
And kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy.

5 *Bot.* Where 's Peaseblossom?

Peas. Ready.

Bot. Scratch my head, Peaseblossom. Where 's Mounsieur Cobweb?

Cob. Ready.

10 *Bot.* Mounsieur Cobweb, good mounsieur, get you your weapons in your hand, and kill me a red-hipp'd humble-bee on the top of a thistle; and, good mounsieur, bring me the honey-bag. Do not fret yourself too much in the action, mounsieur; and, 15 good mounsieur, have a care the honey-bag break not; I would be loath to have you overflown with a honey-bag, signior. Where 's Mounsieur Mustardseed?

Mus. Ready.

Bot. Give me your neaf, Mounsieur Mustardseed. Pray you, leave your courtesy, good mounsieur. 20

Mus. What 's your will?

Bot. Nothing, good mounsieur, but to help Cavalery Cobweb to scratch. I must to the barber's, mounsieur; for methinks I am marvellous hairy about the face; and I am such a tender ass, if my 25 hair do but tickle me, I must scratch.

Tita. What, wilt thou hear some music, my sweet love?

Bot. I have a reasonable good ear in music. Let's have the tongs and the bones.

[*Music. Tongs. Rural music.*

Tita. Or say, sweet love, what thou desir'st to eat. 30

Bot. Truly, a peck of provender: I could munch your good dry oats. Methinks I have a great desire to a bottle of hay. Good hay, sweet hay, hath no fellow.

Tita. I have a venturous fairy that shall seek
The squirrel's hoard, and fetch thee new nuts. 35

Bot. I had rather have a handful or two of dried peas. But, I pray you, let none of your people stir me; I have an exposition of sleep come upon me.

Tita. Sleep thou, and I will wind thee in my arms.
Fairies, be gone, and be all ways away. 40

[*Exeunt fairies.*]

So doth the woodbine the sweet honeysuckle
Gently entwist; the female ivy so
Enrings the barky fingers of the elm.

O, how I love thee! how I dote on thee!
[*They sleep.*]

Enter ROBIN GOODFELLOW.

Obe. [*Advancing.*] Welcome, good Robin.
45 See'st thou this sweet sight?
Her dotage now I do begin to pity:
For, meeting her of late behind the wood,
Seeking sweet favours for this hateful fool,
I did upbraid her and fall out with her;
50 For she his hairy temples then had rounded
With coronet of fresh and fragrant flowers;
And that same dew, which sometime on the buds
Was wont to swell like round and orient pearls,
Stood now within the pretty flowerets' eyes
55 Like tears that did their own disgrace bewail.
When I had at my pleasure taunted her
And she in mild terms begg'd my patience,
I then did ask of her her changeling child;
Which straight she gave me, and her fairy sent
60 To bear him to my bower in fairy land.
And, now I have the boy, I will undo
This hateful imperfection of her eyes;
And, gentle Puck, take this transformed scalp
From off the head of this Athenian swain,
65 That, he awaking when the other do,
May all to Athens back again repair,
And think no more of this night's accidents
But as the fierce vexation of a dream.
But first I will release the fairy queen.
[*Touching her eyes.*]

Be as thou wast wont to be; 70
See as thou wast wont to see:
Dian's bud o'er Cupid's flower
Hath such force and blessed power.
Now, my Titania; wake you, my sweet queen.
Tita. My Oberon! what visions have I seen! 75
Methought I was enamour'd of an ass.
Obe. There lies your love.
Tita. How came these things to pass?
O, how mine eyes do loathe his visage now!
Obe. Silence awhile. Robin, take off this head.
Titania, music call; and strike more dead 80
Than common sleep of all these five the sense.
Tita. Music, ho! music, such as charmeth sleep!
[*Music, still.*
Robin. Now, when thou wak'st, with thine own fool's eyes peep.
Obe. Sound, music! Come, my queen, take hands with me,
And rock the ground whereon these sleepers be. 85
Now thou and I are new in amity
And will to-morrow midnight solemnly
Dance in Duke Theseus' house triumphantly
And bless it to all fair prosperity.
There shall the pairs of faithful lovers be 90
Wedded, with Theseus, all in jollity.
Robin. Fairy king, attend, and mark;
I do hear the morning lark.
Obe. Then, my queen, in silence sad
Trip we after the night's shade. 95

We the globe can compass soon,
Swifter than the wandering moon.

Tita. Come my lord, and in our flight
Tell me how it came this night
100 That I sleeping here was found
With these mortals on the ground.

[*Exeunt. Horns winded* [*within*].

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, EGEUS, *and all his train.*

The. Go, one of you, find out the forester,
For now our observation is perform'd,
And since we have the vaward of the day,
105 My love shall hear the music of my hounds.
Uncouple in the western valley, let them go.
Despatch, I say, and find the forester.

[*Exit an attendant.*]

We will, fair queen, up to the mountain's top
And mark the musical confusion
110 Of hounds and echo in conjunction.

Hip. I was with Hercules and Cadmus once,
When in a wood of Crete they bay'd the bear
With hounds of Sparta. Never did I hear
Such gallant chiding; for, besides the groves,
115 The skies, the fountains, every region near
Seem'd all one mutual cry. I never heard
So musical a discord, such sweet thunder.

The. My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind,
So flew'd, so sanded, and their heads are hung
120 With ears that sweep away the morning dew;
Crook-knee'd, and dew-lapp'd like Thessalian bulls;

Slow in pursuit, but match'd in mouth like bells,
Each under each. A cry more tuneable
Was never holla'd to, nor cheer'd with horn,
In Crete, in Sparta, nor in Thessaly. 125
Judge when you hear. But, soft! what nymphs are these?

Ege. My lord, this is my daughter here asleep,
And this, Lysander; this Demetrius is;
This Helena, old Nedar's Helena.
I wonder of their being here together. 130

The. No doubt they rose up early to observe
The rite of May, and, hearing our intent,
Came here in grace of our solemnity.
But speak, Egeus; is not this the day
That Hermia should give answer of her choice? 135

Ege. It is, my lord.

The. Go, bid the huntsmen wake them with their horns.

[*Horns and shout within. Lys., Dem., Hel., and Her. wake and start up.*

Good morrow, friends. Saint Valentine is past;
Begin these wood-birds but to couple now?

Lys. Pardon, my lord.

The. I pray you all, stand up. 140
I know you two are rival enemies;
How comes this gentle concord in the world,
That hatred is so far from jealousy,
To sleep by hate, and fear no enmity?

Lys. My lord, I shall reply amazedly, 145
Half sleep, half waking; but as yet, I swear,

I cannot truly say how I came here.
But, as I think,—for truly would I speak,
And now I do bethink me, so it is,—
150 I came with Hermia hither. Our intent
Was to be gone from Athens, where we might,
Without the peril of the Athenian law—

Ege. Enough, enough, my lord; you have enough.
I beg the law, the law, upon his head.
155 They would have stolen away; they would, Demetrius,
Thereby to have defeated you and me,
You of your wife, and me of my consent,
Of my consent that she should be your wife.

Dem. My lord, fair Helen told me of their stealth,
160 Of this their purpose hither to this wood;
And I in fury hither followed them,
Fair Helena in fancy following me.
But, my good lord, I wot not by what power,—
But by some power it is,—my love to Hermia,
165 Melted as [is] the snow, seems to me now
As the remembrance of an idle gaud
Which in my childhood I did dote upon;
And all the faith, the virtue of my heart,
The object and the pleasure of mine eye,
170 Is only Helena. To her, my lord,
Was I betroth'd ere I saw Hermia;
But like a sickness did I loathe this food;
But, as in health, come to my natural taste,
Now I do wish it, love it, long for it,
175 And will for evermore be true to it.

The. Fair lovers, you are fortunately met;

Of this discourse we more will hear anon.
Egeus, I will overbear your will;
For in the temple, by and by, with us
These couples shall eternally be knit. 180
And, for the morning now is something worn,
Our purpos'd hunting shall be set aside.
Away with us to Athens; three and three,
We 'll hold a feast in great solemnity.
Come, Hippolyta. 185

[*Exeunt The., Hip., Ege., and train.*

Dem. These things seem small and undistinguishable,
Like far-off mountains turned into clouds.

Her. Methinks I see these things with parted eye,
When every thing seems double.

Hel. So methinks;
And I have found Demetrius like a jewel, 190
Mine own, and not mine own.

Dem. Are you sure that we 're awake? It seems to me
That yet we sleep, we dream. Do not you think
The Duke was here, and bid us follow him?

Her. Yea; and my father.

Hel And Hippolyta. 195

Lys. And he did bid us follow to the temple.

Dem. Why, then, we are awake. Let 's follow him;
And by the way let us recount our dreams.

[*Exeunt lovers.*

Bot. [*Awaking.*] When my cue comes, call me,

200 and I will answer. My next is, "Most fair Pyramus." Heigh-ho! Peter Quince! Flute, the bellows-mender! Snout, the tinker! Starveling! God 's my life, stolen hence, and left me asleep! I have had a most rare vision. I have had a dream, past the wit of man to 205 say what dream it was. Man is but an ass, if he go about to expound this dream. Methought I was— there is no man can tell what. Methought I was,— and methought I had,—but man is but a patch'd fool, if he will offer to say what methought I had. The 210 eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report, what my dream was. I will get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream. It shall be called Bottom's Dream, 215 because it hath no bottom; and I will sing it in the latter end of a play, before the Duke; peradventure, to make it the more gracious, I shall sing it at her death. [*Exit.*

[SCENE II. *Athens. Quince's house.*]

Enter QUINCE, FLUTE, SNOUT, *and* STARVELING.

Quin. Have you sent to Bottom's house? Is he come home yet?

Star. He cannot be heard of. Out of doubt he is transported.

5 *Flu.* If he comes not, then the play is marr'd. It goes not forward, doth it?

Quin. It is not possible. You have not a man in all Athens able to discharge Pyramus but he.

Flu. No, he hath simply the best wit of any handicraft man in Athens. 10

Snout. Yea, and the best person too; and he is a very paramour for a sweet voice.

Flu. You must say "paragon"; a paramour is, God bless us, a thing of naught.

Enter SNUG.

Snug. Masters, the Duke is coming from the 15 temple, and there is two or three lords and ladies more married. If our sport had gone forward, we had all been made men.

Flu. O sweet bully Bottom! Thus hath he lost sixpence a day during his life; he could not have 20 'scaped sixpence a day. An the Duke had not given him sixpence a day for playing Pyramus, I 'll be hang'd. He would have deserved it. Sixpence a day in Pyramus, or nothing.

Enter BOTTOM.

Bot. Where are these lads? Where are these 25 hearts?

Quin. Bottom! O most courageous day! O most happy hour!

Bot. Masters, I am to discourse wonders, but ask me not what; for if I tell you, I am no true Athenian. 30 I will tell you everything, right as it fell out.

Quin. Let us hear, sweet Bottom.

Bot. Not a word of me. All that I will tell you is, that the Duke hath dined. Get your apparel
35 together, good strings to your beards, new ribbons to your pumps; meet presently at the palace; every man look o'er his part; for the short and the long is, our play is preferr'd. In any case, let Thisby have clean linen; and let not him that plays the lion pare
40 his nails, for they shall hang out for the lion's claws. And, most dear actors, eat no onions nor garlic, for we are to utter sweet breath; and I do not doubt but to hear them say, it is a sweet comedy. No more words; away! go, away!

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

[Scene I. *Athens. The palace of Theseus.*]

Enter Theseus, Hippolyta, Philostrate, *Lords* [*and Attendants*].

Hip. 'T is strange, my Theseus, that these lovers speak of.

The. More strange than true; I never may believe
These antique fables, nor these fairy toys.
Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend 5
More than cool reason ever comprehends.
The lunatic, the lover, and the poet
Are of imagination all compact.
One sees more devils than vast hell can hold;
That is, the madman. The lover, all as frantic, 10
Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt.
The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;
And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen 15
Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.
Such tricks hath strong imagination,

That, if it would but apprehend some joy,
20 It comprehends some bringer of that joy;
Or in the night, imagining some fear,
How easy is a bush suppos'd a bear!

Hip. But all the story of the night told over,
And all their minds transfigur'd so together,
25 More witnesseth than fancy's images,
And grows to something of great constancy;
But, howsoever, strange and admirable.

Enter lovers, LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HERMIA, *and* HELENA.

The. Here come the lovers, full of joy and mirth.
Joy, gentle friends! joy and fresh days of love
Accompany your hearts!

30 *Lys.* More than to us
Wait in your royal walks, your board, your bed!

The. Come now; what masques, what dances shall we have,
To wear away this long age of three hours
Between our after-supper and bed-time?
35 Where is our usual manager of mirth?
What revels are in hand? Is there no play
To ease the anguish of a torturing hour?
Call Philostrate.

Phil. Here, mighty Theseus.

The. Say, what abridgement have you for this evening?
40 What masque? what music? How shall we beguile
The lazy time, if not with some delight?

Phil. There is a brief how many sports are ripe.
Make choice of which your Highness will see first.
[*Giving a paper.*]

The. [*Reads.*] "The battle with the Centaurs, to be sung
By an Athenian eunuch to the harp." 45
We 'll none of that: that have I told my love,
In glory of my kinsman Hercules.
"The riot of the tipsy Bacchanals,
Tearing the Thracian singer in their rage."
That is an old device; and it was play'd 50
When I from Thebes came last a conqueror.
"The thrice three Muses mourning for the death
Of Learning, late deceas'd in beggary."
That is some satire, keen and critical,
Not sorting with a nuptial ceremony. 55
"A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus
And his love Thisbe; very tragical mirth."
Merry and tragical! Tedious and brief!
That is, hot ice and wondrous strange snow.
How shall we find the concord of this discord? 60

Phil. A play there is, my lord, some ten words long,
Which is as brief as I have known a play;
But by ten words, my lord, it is too long,
Which makes it tedious; for in all the play
There is not one word apt, one player fitted. 65
And tragical, my noble lord, it is;
For Pyramus therein doth kill himself.
Which, when I saw rehears'd, I must confess,

Made mine eyes water; but more merry tears
70 The passion of loud laughter never shed.

The. What are they that do play it?

Phil. Hard-handed men that work in Athens here,
Which never labour'd in their minds till now,
And now have toiled their unbreathed memories
75 With this same play, against your nuptial.

The. And we will hear it.

Phil. No, my noble lord;
It is not for you. I have heard it over,
And it is nothing, nothing in the world;
Unless you can find sport in their intents,
80 Extremely stretch'd and conn'd with cruel pain,
To do you service.

The. I will hear that play;
For never anything can be amiss,
When simpleness and duty tender it.
Go, bring them in; and take your places, ladies.
[*Exit Philostrate.*]

85 *Hip.* I love not to see wretchedness o'ercharged,
And duty in his service perishing.

The. Why, gentle sweet, you shall see no such thing.

Hip. He says they can do nothing in this kind.

The. The kinder we, to give them thanks for nothing.
90 Our sport shall be to take what they mistake;
And what poor duty cannot do, noble respect
Takes it in might, not merit.
Where I have come, great clerks have purposed

To greet me with premeditated welcomes;
Where I have seen them shiver and look pale, 95
Make periods in the midst of sentences,
Throttle their practis'd accent in their fears,
And in conclusion dumbly have broke off,
Not paying me a welcome. Trust me, sweet,
Out of this silence yet I pick'd a welcome; 100
And in the modesty of fearful duty
I read as much as from the rattling tongue
Of saucy and audacious eloquence.
Love, therefore, and tongue-ti'd simplicity
In least speak most, to my capacity. 105

[*Re-enter* PHILOSTRATE.]

Phil. So please your Grace, the Prologue is address'd.
The. Let him approach.

[*Flourish of trumpets.*

Enter [QUINCE *for*] *the Prologue.*

Pro. If we offend, it is with our good will.
That you should think, we come not to offend,
But with good will. To show our simple skill, 110
That is the true beginning of our end.
Consider then we come but in despite.
We do not come as minding to content you,
Our true intent is. All for your delight
We are not here. That you should here repent
you, 115
The actors are at hand, and by their show
You shall know all that you are like to know.
The. This fellow doth not stand upon points.

Lys. He hath rid his prologue like a rough colt;
120 he knows not the stop. A good moral, my lord: it is not enough to speak, but to speak true.

Hip. Indeed he hath play'd on this prologue like a child on a recorder; a sound, but not in government.

The. His speech was like a tangled chain; nothing
125 impaired, but all disordered. Who is next?

Enter with a trumpet before them, PYRAMUS *and* THISBE, WALL, MOONSHINE, *and* LION.

Pro. Gentles, perchance you wonder at this show;
But wonder on, till truth make all things plain.
This man is Pyramus, if you would know;
This beauteous lady Thisby is certain.
130 This man, with lime and rough-cast, doth present
Wall, that vile Wall which did these lovers sunder;
And through Wall's chink, poor souls, they are content
To whisper. At the which let no man wonder.
This man with lantern, dog, and bush of thorn,
135 Presenteth Moonshine; for, if you will know,
By moonshine did these lovers think no scorn
To meet at Ninus' tomb, there, there to woo.
This grisly beast, which Lion hight by name,
The trusty Thisby, coming first by night,
140 Did scare away, or rather did affright;
And, as she fled, her mantle she did fall,
Which Lion vile with bloody mouth did stain.
Anon comes Pyramus, sweet youth and tall,
And finds his trusty Thisby's mantle slain;

Whereat, with blade, with bloody blameful blade, 145
He bravely broach'd his boiling bloody breast;
And Thisby, tarrying in mulberry shade,
His dagger drew, and died. For all the rest,
Let Lion, Moonshine, Wall, and lovers twain
At large discourse, while here they do remain. 150
[*Exeunt Prologue, Thisbe, Lion, and Moonshine.*

The. I wonder if the lion be to speak.

Dem. No wonder, my lord; one lion may, when many asses do.

Wall. In this same interlude it doth befall
That I, one Snout by name, present a wall; 155
And such a wall, as I would have you think.
That had in it a crannied hole or chink,
Through which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisby,
Did whisper often very secretly.
This loam, this rough-cast, and this stone doth show 160
That I am that same wall; the truth is so;
And this the cranny is, right and sinister,
Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper.

The. Would you desire lime and hair to speak better? 165

Dem. It is the wittiest partition that ever I heard discourse, my lord.

Enter PYRAMUS.

The. Pyramus draws near the wall. Silence!

Pyr. O grim-look'd night! O night with hue so black!

170 O night, which ever art when day is not!
O night, O night! alack, alack, alack,
I fear my Thisby's promise is forgot!
And thou, O wall, O sweet, O lovely wall,
That stand'st between her father's ground and mine!
175 Thou wall, O wall, O sweet and lovely wall,
Show me thy chink, to blink through with mine eyne!

[*Wall holds up his fingers.*]

Thanks, courteous wall; Jove shield thee well for this!
But what see I? No Thisby do I see.
O wicked wall, through whom I see no bliss!
180 Curs'd be thy stones for thus deceiving me!

The. The wall, methinks, being sensible, should curse again.

Pyr. No, in truth, sir, he should not. "Deceiving me" is Thisby's cue. She is to enter now, and I am
185 to spy her through the wall. You shall see it will fall pat as I told you. Yonder she comes.

Enter THISBE.

This. O wall, full often hast thou heard my moans,
For parting my fair Pyramus and me!
My cherry lips have often kiss'd thy stones,
190 Thy stones with lime and hair knit up in thee.

Pyr. I see a voice! Now will I to the chink,
To spy an I can hear my Thisby's face.
Thisby!

This. My love thou art, my love I think.

Pyr. Think what thou wilt, I am thy lover's grace;
And, like Limander, am I trusty still. 195
This. And I like Helen, till the Fates me kill.
Pyr. Not Shafalus to Procrus was so true.
This. As Shafalus to Procrus, I to you.
Pyr. O, kiss me through the hole of this vile wall!
This. I kiss the wall's hole, not your lips at all. 200
Pyr. Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straightway?
This. 'Tide life, 'tide death, I come without delay.
[*Exeunt Pyramus and Thisbe.*]
Wall. Thus have I, Wall, my part discharged so;
And, being done, thus Wall away doth go. [*Exit.*

The. Now is the moon used between the two 205 neighbours.

Dem. No remedy, my lord, when walls are so wilful to hear without warning.

Hip. This is the silliest stuff that ever I heard.

The. The best in this kind are but shadows; and 210 the worst are no worse, if imagination amend them.

Hip. It must be your imagination then, and not theirs.

The. If we imagine no worse of them than they of themselves, they may pass for excellent men. Here 215 come two noble beasts in, a man and a lion.

Enter LION *and* MOONSHINE.

Lion. You, ladies, you, whose gentle hearts do fear
The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on floor,

May now perchance both quake and tremble here,
220 When lion rough in wildest rage doth roar.
Then know that I, one Snug the joiner, am
A lion fell, nor else no lion's dam;
For, if I should as lion come in strife
Into this place, 't were pity on my life.

225 *The.* A very gentle beast, and of a good conscience.

Dem. The very best at a beast, my lord, that e'er I saw.

Lys. This lion is a very fox for his valour.

230 *The.* True; and a goose for his discretion.

Dem. Not so, my lord; for his valour cannot carry his discretion, and the fox carries the goose.

The. His discretion, I am sure, cannot carry his valour; for the goose carries not the fox. It is well;
235 leave it to his discretion, and let us hearken to the moon.

Moon. This lantern doth the horned moon present;—

Dem. He should have worn the horns on his head.

The. He is no crescent, and his horns are invisible
240 within the circumference.

Moon. This lantern doth the horned moon present;
Myself the man i' the moon do seem to be.

The. This is the greatest error of all the rest. The man should be put into the lantern. How is it
245 else the man i' the moon?

Dem. He dares not come there for the candle; for, you see, it is already in snuff.

Hip. I am aweary of this moon. Would he would change!

The. It appears, by his small light of discretion, 250 that he is in the wane; but yet, in courtesy, in all reason, we must stay the time.

Lys. Proceed, Moon.

Moon. All that I have to say, is, to tell you that the lantern is the moon; I, the man i' the moon; 255 this thorn-bush, my thorn-bush; and this dog, my dog.

Dem. Why, all these should be in the lantern; for all these are in the moon. But, silence! here 260 comes Thisbe.

Enter THISBE.

This. This is old Ninny's tomb. Where is my love?

Lion. [*Roaring.*] Oh—— [*Thisbe runs off.*

Dem. Well roar'd, Lion.

The. Well run, Thisbe.

Hip. Well shone, Moon. Truly, the moon shines 265 with a good grace.

[*The Lion shakes Thisbe's mantle, and exit.*]

The. Well mous'd, Lion.

Dem. And then came Pyramus.

Lys. And so the lion vanish'd.

Enter PYRAMUS.

Pyr. Sweet Moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams; 270

I thank thee, Moon, for shining now so bright;
For, by thy gracious, golden glittering gleams,
I trust to take of truest Thisby sight.

But stay, O spite!
275 But mark, poor knight,
What dreadful dole is here!
Eyes, do you see?
How can it be?
O dainty duck! O dear!
280 Thy mantle good,
What, stain'd with blood!
Approach, ye Furies fell!
O Fates, come, come,
Cut thread and thrum;
285 Quail, crush, conclude, and quell!

The. This passion, and the death of a dear friend, would go near to make a man look sad.

Hip. Beshrew my heart, but I pity the man.

Pyr. O wherefore, Nature, didst thou lions frame?
290 Since lion vile hath here deflower'd my dear;
Which is—no, no—which was the fairest dame
That liv'd, that lov'd, that lik'd, that look'd with cheer.

Come tears, confound;
Out, sword and wound
295 The pap of Pyramus;
Ay, that left pap,
Where heart doth hop.

[*Stabs himself.*]

Thus die I, thus, thus, thus.
Now am I dead,
Now am I fled; 300
My soul is in the sky.
Tongue, lose thy light;
Moon, take thy flight.
[*Exit Moonshine.*]
Now die, die, die, die, die. [*Dies.*]

Dem. No die, but an ace, for him; for he is but one. 305

Lys. Less than an ace, man, for he is dead; he is nothing.

The. With the help of a surgeon he might yet recover, and yet prove an ass. 310

Hip. How chance Moonshine is gone before Thisbe comes back and finds her lover?

Re-enter THISBE.

The. She will find him by starlight. Here she comes; and her passion ends the play.

Hip. Methinks she should not use a long one for such a Pyramus. I hope she will be brief. 315

Dem. A mote will turn the balance, which Pyramus, which Thisbe, is the better; he for a man, God warrant us; she for a woman, God bless us.

Lys. She hath spied him already with those sweet eyes. 320

Dem. And thus she moans, videlicet:—

This. Asleep, my love?
What, dead, my dove?

325 O Pyramus, arise!
Speak, speak! Quite dumb?
Dead, dead? A tomb
Must cover thy sweet eyes.
These lily lips,
330 This cherry nose,
These yellow cowslip cheeks,
Are gone, are gone!
Lovers, make moan.
His eyes were green as leeks.
335 O Sisters Three,
Come, come to me,
With hands as pale as milk;
Lay them in gore,
Since you have shore
340 With shears his thread of silk.
Tongue, not a word!
Come, trusty sword;
Come, blade, my breast imbrue;
[*Stabs herself.*]
And, farewell, friends;
345 Thus Thisby ends.
Adieu, adieu, adieu. [*Dies.*]

The. Moonshine and Lion are left to bury the dead.

Dem. Ay, and Wall too.

350 [*Bot. Starting up.*] No, I assure you; the wall is down that parted their fathers. Will it please you to see the epilogue, or to hear a Bergomask dance between two of our company?

The. No epilogue, I pray you; for your play needs no excuse. Never excuse; for when the players 355
are all dead, there need none to be blamed. Marry, if he that writ it had played Pyramus and hang'd himself in Thisbe's garter, it would have been a fine tragedy; and so it is, truly; and very notably discharg'd. But come, your Bergomask; let your epilogue alone. 360

[*A dance.*]

The iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve.
Lovers, to bed; 't is almost fairy time.
I fear we shall out-sleep the coming morn
As much as we this night have overwatch'd.
This palpable-gross play hath well beguil'd 365
The heavy gait of night. Sweet friends, to bed.
A fortnight hold we this solemnity
In nightly revels and new jollity. [*Exeunt.*

Enter ROBIN GOODFELLOW.

Robin. Now the hungry lion roars,
And the wolf behowls the moon; 370
Whilst the heavy ploughman snores,
All with weary task fordone.
Now the wasted brands do glow,
Whilst the screech-owl, screeching loud,
Puts the wretch that lies in woe 375
In remembrance of a shroud.
Now it is the time of night
That the graves, all gaping wide,
Every one lets forth his sprite,
In the church-way paths to glide. 380

And we fairies, that do run
By the triple Hecate's team
From the presence of the sun
Following darkness like a dream,
385 Now are frolic. Not a mouse
Shall disturb this hallowed house.
I am sent with broom before,
To sweep the dust behind the door.

Enter OBERON *and* TITANIA *with their train.*

Obe. Through the house give glimmering light
390 By the dead and drowsy fire,
Every elf and fairy sprite
Hop as light as bird from brier;
And this ditty, after me,
Sing, and dance it trippingly.
395 *Tita.* First, rehearse your song by rote,
To each word a warbling note.
Hand in hand, with fairy grace,
Will we sing, and bless this place.
[*Song* [*and dance*]
Obe. Now, until the break of day,
400 Through this house each fairy stray.
To the best bride-bed will we,
Which by us shall blessed be;
And the issue there create
Ever shall be fortunate.
405 So shall all the couples three
Ever true in loving be;
And the blots of Nature's hand

Shall not in their issue stand;
Never mole, hare-lip, nor scar,
Nor mark prodigious, such as are 410
Despised in nativity,
Shall upon their children be.
With this field-dew consecrate,
Every fairy take his gait,
And each several chamber bless, 415
Through this palace, with sweet peace;
And the owner of it blest
Ever shall in safety rest.
Trip away; make no stay;
Meet me all by break of day. 420
[*Exeunt* [*Oberon, Titania, and train*].

Robin. If we shadows have offended,
Think but this, and all is mended,
That you have but slumb'red here
While these visions did appear.
And this weak and idle theme, 425
No more yielding but a dream,
Gentles, do not reprehend.
If you pardon, we will mend.
And, as I am an honest Puck,
If we have unearned luck 430
Now to 'scape the serpent's tongue,
We will make amends ere long;
Else the Puck a liar call.
So, good night unto you all.
Give me your hands, if we be friends, 435
And Robin shall restore amends. [*Exit.*]

NOTES

ABBREVIATIONS

A.—Arden Edition, by E. K. Chambers. (D. C. Heath & Co.)

B.—Edition by G. P. Baker. (Longman's English Classics.)

C.—Edition by Henry Cunningham. (Dowden Shakespeare.)

G.—Globe Edition of Shakspere. References to other plays of Shakspere's than *Midsummer-Night's Dream* are according to the line numbering of this edition and that by W. A. Neilson in "The Cambridge Poets."

R.—Edition by W. J. Rolfe. (American Book Co.)

Var.—Variorum Edition, by H. H. Furness.

Gr.—Abbott's *Shakesperian Grammar.*

S.—Schmidt's *Shakespeare-Lexicon.*

ACT I.

I. i. In this scene, which is mainly exposition, the first nineteen lines afford a setting for the play by preparing for the central incident around which the other events group themselves, the wedding of Theseus and Hippolyta. The remainder of the scene indicates the nature of the complications that are to follow, by its rehearsal of the difficulties of the two pairs of lovers. Matters are brought rapidly to a head by the command of Theseus that Hermia must wed Demetrius or suffer the penalty for disobedience. The action is started by the determination of Hermia and Lysander to flee, and of Helena to inform Demetrius, which leads all four to the wood where the comedy of "errors" is played.

I. i. 4. *Lingers.* Delays; used transitively.

I. i. 5. *Dowager.* A widow who has during her lifetime a claim on part of the heir's estate, and who thus, during the period in which she is withering away, delays the heir from entering into full possession of his revenue.

I. i. 11. *Philostrate.* Pronounced as a trisyllable, as are *Theseus* and *Egeus* through the play.

I. i. 13. *Pert.* Lively

I. i. 15. *Companion.* Often used by Shakspere in the contemptuous way that we sometimes use "fellow."

I. i. 20. *Duke.* Shakspere perhaps took this anachronistic title from Chaucer's *Knight's Tale,* which begins as follows:

> "Whilom, as olde stories tellen us,
> Ther was a duk that highte Theseus;
> Of Athenes he was lord and governour,
> And in his tyme swich a conquerour,
> That gretter was ther non under the sonne.
> Ful many a riche contré hadde he wonne;
> That with his wisdom and his chivalrie
> He conquered al the regne of Femynye,
> That whilom was i-cleped Cithea;
> And weddede the queen Ipolita,
> And brought hire hoom with him in his contré
> With moche glorie and gret solempnité."

This passage also explains the allusion in ll. 16-17.

I. i. 27. For meter, cf. Introd., p. 39,2. For the charge of witchcraft cf. *Othello,* I. iii. 60 ff.

I. i. 31. *Faining.* "Loving, longing, yearning; love-sick" (Var.) Many editors emend to *feigning.*

I. i. 32. *Stolen. . . fantasy.* Stealthily impressed thyself on her fancy.

I. i. 33. *Gawds.* Baubles, trifling ornaments. *Conceits.* Fanciful devices.

I. i. 35. *Prevailment.* Influence. *Unhard'ned.* Impressionable, like soft wax.

I. i. 36. *Filch'd.* Stolen.

I. i. 45. *Immediately.* Especially, expressly.

I. i. 54. *In this kind.* In this present respect of marriage. *Voice* Approval.

I. i. 68. *Blood.* Passion, impulse.

I. i. 69. *Whether.* Cf. Introd., p. 39, 2.

I. i. 71. *Mew'd.* Confined.

I. i. 73. *Moon.* *I. e.* Diana, the moon-goddess.

I. i. 74-5. For the significance of these lines as bearing on the presence of Queen Elizabeth at the performance of the play, cf. Introd., p. 38.

I. i. 76. *Earthlier happy.* Happier on earth, or from a worldly point of view.

I. i. 80. *Virgin patent.* My privilege as an unmarried woman.

I. i. 81. *Unwished yoke.* For omission of preposition *to* see Introd., p. 44, 6, a.

I. i. 89. *Protest.* Vow.

I. i. 92. *Crazed.* Feeble, not valid.

I. i. 98. *Estate unto.* Settle upon.

I. i. 99. *Deriv'd.* Born, descended.

I. i. 100. *Well possess'd.* Rich.

I. i. 110. *Spotted.* Stained with guilt, unfaithful.

I. i. 118. *Fancies.* Love.

I. i. 120. *Extenuate.* Weaken, make lighter.

I. i. 125. *Against.* In preparation for. Cf. Introd., p. 44, 6, c.

I. i. 129. *How chance?* How does it chance that?

I. i. 130. *Belike.* Probably.

I. i. 131. *Beteem them.* Allow them, bestow upon them.

I. i. 135. *Blood.* Rank, birth.

I. i. 136. *O cross!* etc. What misfortune that one well-born should be slavishly in love with a person of lower rank!

I. i. 137. *Misgraffed.* Badly grafted or united.

I. i. 143. *Momentany.* "Momentary" is Shakspere's usual form, but this form is found occasionally in other writers of the period.

I. i. 145. *Collied.* Blackened, as with coal. Cf. collier, colliery.

I. i. 146. *Spleen.* Sudden impulse of emotion, flash of passion.

I. i. 149, 151, 152. For pronunciation of *confusion, edict,* and *patience,* cf. Introd., p. 41.

I. i. 152. *Let us teach our trial patience.* Let us teach ourselves patience in enduring our trial.

I. i. 154. *Due.* Appropriate.

I. i. 155. *Fancy's.* Love's.

I. i. 158. *Revenue.* Accent on the second syllable. This pronunciation is still used in the British Parliament.

I. i. 159. *Leagues.* A league was usually considered the equivalent of three miles. But cf. l. 165 below, and I. ii. 98, where it is apparently regarded as a mile.

I. i. 160. *Respects.* Regards.

I. i. 164. *Steal forth thy father's house.* See Introd., p. 44, 6, a, for omission of *from.*

I. i. 167. For an excellent description of English May-day observances read Brandt's *Popular Antiquities,* vol. i, pp. 212-34.

I. i. 170. *Golden head.* Cupid had two kinds of arrows, one tipped with gold, the other with lead. For their opposite effects cf. Golding's translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses,* I. 466 ff:

"Therefrom his quiver full of shafts two arrows he did take
Of sundry powers; tone causes Love, the tother doth it slake.
That causeth love is all of golde, with point full sharpe and bright,
That chaseth love is blunt, whose steele with leaden head is dight."

I. i. 171. *Simplicity.* Innocence.

I. i. 172. This vague allusion is often explained as referring to the cestus or girdle of Venus, which aroused love for the wearer. But *that* may simply mean "all."

I. i. 173-4. A reference to the desertion of Dido, queen of Carthage by the Trojan Aeneas. See Virgil's *Aeneid.*

I. i. 182. *Fair.* Fairness, beauty. Shakspere frequently uses the adjective for the substantive; cf. *Comedy of Errors*, II. i. 98:

"My decayed fair
A sunny look of his would soon repair."

Also *Venus and Adonis* 1083, 1086, and cf. Introd., p. 42, 3, b.

I. i. 183. *Lode-stars.* Guiding-stars; like the North Star, by which sailors guide their course. "Here Helena seems to mean, not only that Hermia's eyes are 'guiding stars,' but also that they have the irresistible power of attraction which *lode* (cf. 'lode-stone') suggests." [B.]

I. i. 186. *Favour.* Personal appearance.

I. i. 190. *Bated.* Excepted.

I. i. 191. *Translated.* Transformed.

I. i. 209. *Phoebe.* Another name for Diana, the moon.

I. i. 212. *Still.* Ever.

I. i. 215. *Faint.* Pale.

I. i. 219. *Stranger companies.* Strange companions.

I. i. 231. *So I . . . qualities.* So do I err in admiring his qualities. See Introd., p. 44, 6, b.

I. i. 232. *Holding no quantity.* "Bearing no proportion to what they are estimated at by love." [S.]

I. i. 242. *Eyne.* The old plural form of *eye*; also written *eyen.* Cf. other plurals in *-en* like oxen, children.

I. i. 249. *Dear expense.* It will be a very costly proceeding for me to earn thanks by telling my love where he may find my rival.

I. ii. Scene two introduces the low-comedy of the play, and connects the actors in it with the main thread of the story through their purpose to entertain Theseus on his wedding day. It also promises to bring them into contact with the group of lovers, since Quince gives orders to meet in the same wood whither Lysander and Hermia propose to flee. The kind of humor furnished by Bottom's contorted vocabulary has been frequently used as a comic device by Shakspere and other English dramatists; perhaps the best known example of the type, outside of Shakspere, is Mrs. Malaprop in Sheridan's *Rivals.* Cf. Dogberry in *Much Ado about Nothing.*

I. ii. 2. *You were best.* It were best for you. *You,* which is really a dative, had, by Shakspere's time, come to be regarded as a nominative; cf. "I were better," *2 Henry IV.*, I. ii. 245; "I were best not call," *Cymbeline,* III. vi. 19. *Generally.* Bottom's equivalent for "individually."

I. ii. 3. *Scrip.* Script, written list.

I. ii. 6. *Interlude.* This name, originally applied to the slight dramatic pieces played between courses of a banquet or as part of a long entertainment, came later to be used of any of the less dignified types of dramatic performance.

I. ii. 10. *Grow to a point.* Come to the point, "get down to business," as we say.

I. ii. 11. *Marry.* By (the Virgin) Mary, a common oath. The title pages of plays published in Shakspere's early days often bore such conflicting titles: *e. g. A Lamentable Tragedie, mixed full of pleasant Mirth, containing The Life of Cambises, King of Percia*; and *A New Tragicall Comedie of Apius and Virginia* (1575).

I. ii. 23. *Gallant.* See Introd., p. 43, 5, b.

I. ii. 27. *Condole.* Lament. Cf. *Henry V.*, II. i. 133, where Pistol says, "Let us condole the Knight."

I. ii. 28. *Humour.* Taste.

I. ii. 29. *Ercles.* The part of Hercules, like that of Herod, gave the actor who played it opportunity to indulge in much violent action, and deliver himself of a great deal of rant and bombast. Thus in Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit* (1592) a player says, "The twelve labours of Hercules have I terribly thundered on the stage." The theatrical manager Henslowe records in his diary the performance in May, 1595, of the two parts of a play of *Hercules*, and these may be identical with Thomas Heywood's *Silver Age* and *Brazen Age* (pub. 1613), in which Hercules plays a prominent and very rhetorical part.

I. ii. 30. *A part to tear a cat in.* It has been suggested that this may be intended as a burlesque on the killing of a lion by Hercules, but it was a proverbial expression; cf. Day's *Isle of Gulls* (1606), "I had rather hear two such jests, than a whole play of such Tear-cat thunder-claps;" *Histriomastix* (1610), "Sirrah, this is you would rend and tear the cat Upon a stage;" *The Roaring Girl* (1611), "I am called, by those who have seen my valour, Tear-cat."

To make all split. A common phrase, originally nautical, used of persons accustomed to "tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings," (*Hamlet*, III. ii. 10 ff.). Rolfe suggests that the lines following may be a burlesque on the opening lines of *Hercules Furens*, translated from the Latin of Seneca, in 1581, and quotes:

> "O Lorde of Ghostes! whose fyrye flashe
> That forth thy hande doth shake,
> Doth cause the trembling lodges twayne,
> Of Phoebus' carre to shake.
> Raygne reachlesse nowe; in every place
> Thy peace procurde I have,
> Aloffe where Nereus lookes up lande,
> Empalde in winding wave."

Also

> "The roring rocks have quaking sturd,
> And none therat hath pusht;
> Hell gloummy gates I have brast oape,
> Where grisly ghosts all husht
> Have stood . . . "

I. ii. 49. *Play it in a mask.* See Introd., p. 26, on the Elizabethan theatre. If there were not boys enough to fill all the feminine roles the adults who played the parts performed in masks.

I. ii. 51. *An.* If.

I. ii. 52. *Thisne.* "It may be questioned whether the true reading is not *thisne, thisne;* that is, 'in this manner,' a meaning which 'thissen' has in several dialects." [Cambridge Ed.] Most critics have considered this Bottom's attempt to pronounce the lady's name in a "monstrous little voice."

I. ii. 70. *That.* So that, as often.

I. ii. 80. *Aggravate.* Mrs, Quickly makes the same mistake of using this word when she means precisely the opposite in *2 Henry IV.*, II. iv. 175, "I beseek you now, aggravate your choler."

I. ii. 81. *You.* Ethical dative; see Introd., p. 42, 2, c.

I. ii. 82. *An 'twere.* As if it were.

I. ii. 84. *Proper.* Handsome.

I. ii. 90. To dye the beard was a custom of Shakspere's time.

I. ii. 91. *Purple-in-grain.* Some shade of red; Judas in the old Mystery plays wore a red beard.

I ii. 92. *French-crown-colour.* The color of the French coin called a crown, *i. e.* pale yellow. Quince, in replying, puns on the other meaning of crown = head.

I. ii. 105. *Obscenely.* Perhaps Bottom means "obscurely"; another suggestion is "seemly"; yet another, "unseen."

I. ii. 108. *Hold or cut bow-strings.* A doubtful phrase, the general meaning of which seems to be "whatever happens." Bottom echoes Quince: "Yes, let us meet at the Duke's oak no matter what may come up."

ACT II.

II. i. We have hitherto met two of the groups of characters concerned in the action of the play; the third group, from whose interference in the affairs of the mortals most of the complications arise, now make their appearance. The fairy kingdom is not essentially unlike realms more mundane, and of the internal dissensions that disturb it we learn in the first part of the scene, while in the last part Oberon proposes to punish his rebellious queen and to restore peace among the lovers by means of his magic plant. The scene is remarkable for the large amount of very beautiful descriptive poetry, which advances the action scarcely at all, but is highly acceptable for its own sake.

II. i. S. D. The *one door* and *another* of the stage direction refer, of course, to actual stage arrangements, rather than to the imaginary "wood near Athens."

II. i. 2. C. quotes Coleridge on the meter used by the fairy as "invented and employed by Shakespeare for the sake of its appropriateness to the rapid and airy motion of the fairy by whom the speech is delivered."

II. i. 7. *Sphere.* According to the Ptolemaic system of astronomy, still in vogue when Shakspere wrote, the moon and all the other heavenly bodies were fixed in concentric hollow crystalline spheres that rotated around the earth, which was supposed to be fixed at the center of this series of spheres. Hence the motion of sun, moon, planets and fixed stars was due to the rotation of the spheres in which they were embedded. This motion was also responsible for the "music of the spheres" of which Lorenzo speaks in *Merchant of Venice,* V. i. 60-2:

"There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-ey'd cherubins."

II. i. 9. *Orbs.* The rings of darker grass sometimes seen in a pasture, called "fairy rings," and believed by the peasantry to be made by the feet of dancing fairies.

II. i. 10. *Tall.* That the cowslips are tall to the fairies shows how small the fairies are. Yet they must have been represented on the stage by children. *Pensioners.* Queen Elizabeth kept a bodyguard called the Gentlemen Pensioners, made up of fifty tall and handsome young men of good birth, who were gorgeously attired.

II. i. 11. *Spots.* Cf. *Cymbeline,* II. ii. 38:

"A mole cinque-spotted like the crimson drops
I' the bottom of a cowslip."

II. i. 16. *Lob.* Clown, lout; the word is allied to "lubber," and has a suggestion of awkwardness.

II. i. 20. *Wrath.* See Introd., p. 42, 1, b.

II. i. 23. *Changeling.* The fairies were supposed to steal beautiful children and leave in exchange ugly elves; here, however, the word is applied to a child thus carried away.

II. i. 25. *Trace.* Roam.

II. i. 29. *Sheen.* Shining, bright.

II. i. 30. *Square.* Quarrel.

II. i. 33. *Shrewd.* Mischievous, wicked.

II. i. 34. *Robin Goodfellow.* The class of household spirits represented by Robin Goodfellow is, of course, quite distinct from dainty beings like Titania's elves.

II. i. 35. *Villagery.* Village folk, peasantry.

II. i. 36. *Skim.* The change of construction from the third person singular of "frights" is caused by a change of thought from the grammatical antecedent "he" to the logical antecedent "you." *Quern.* A hand-mill for grinding corn.

II. i. 38. *Barm.* Properly yeast, but here used rather of the froth

from which the yeast was made. The drink failed to ferment properly, to come to a head and show froth.

II. i. 39. *Mislead . . . harm.* *I. e.* the will-o'-the-wisp.

II. i. 40. *Puck.* Not strictly a proper name, but the name of a class of spirits, a synonym for devil or fiend; cf. V. i. 429.

II. i. 48. *Crab.* Crab-apple; these were roasted in the fire and formed one of the ingredients of a hot, spiced drink.

II. i. 51. *Aunt.* Used generically for "old woman." *Saddest.* Soberest, most serious.

II. i. 54. *"Tailor" cries.* The best explanation of the epithet is that offered by Halliwell, who says it is equivalent to "thief," and quotes from *Pasquil's Night-Cap* (1612):

> "Theeving is now an occupation made,
> Though men the name of tailor doe it give."

II. i. 55. *Quire.* Choir, company.

II. i. 56. *Waxen.* Wax, increase. *Neeze.* Sneeze.

II. i. 66, 68. *Corin, Phillida.* Conventional names in pastoral poetry for a shepherd and shepherdess.

II. i. 67. *Corn.* Shepherds' pipes were made of oaten straw.

II. i. 70. *Bouncing.* The word has a scornful signification coming from the lips of dainty Titania.

II. i. 71. *Buskin'd.* The buskin was the Latin *cothurnus*, a high boot used by warriors, hunters, and tragic actors.

II. i. 75. *Glance at.* Hint at, indirectly attack.

II. i. 78-80. *Perigenia, Aegle, Ariadne, Antiopa.* Shakspere took these names of the loves of Theseus from North's translation of Plutarch's Life of Theseus.

I. i. 82. *Middle summer's spring.* The beginning of midsummer.

II. i. 84. *Paved.* With pebbly bottom.

II. i. 85. *Margent.* A poetical form of *margin.*

II. i. 86. *Ringlets.* Fairy rings, like the *orbs* of l. 9.

II. i. 88-117. For an account of the attempts to date the play from this passage see Introd., p. 33.

II. i. 90. *Contagious.* Fogs were popularly supposed to carry infection and pestilence.

II. i. 92. *Overborne their continents.* Overflowed their banks.

II. i. 95. *His.* Its. See Introd., p. 42, 2, a.

II. i. 97. *Murrain.* Plague-stricken.

II. i. 98. *Nine men's morris.* A game somewhat resembling draughts, sometimes played on the turf by rustics.

II. i. 99. *Quaint mazes.* Labyrinths marked out on the grass, and kept trodden down by the boys at their sports. There was long such a maze near Winchester School. *Wanton.* Playful; a case of metonymy, for the adjective is transferred from the playing boys to the place where they carry on their sport.

II i. 104. *Washes.* Wets, makes damp.

II. i. 105. *Rheumatic diseases.* These included colds, catarrhs, etc., in addition to what we now call rheumatism.

II. i. 106. *Distemperature.* Disturbance of the natural order of things. It has been taken, however, as referring to the quarrel between Oberon and Titania.

II. i. 109. *Hiems.* Winter. *Thin.* Thinly covered.

II. i. 112. *Childing.* Fruitful. Cf. Sonnet 97:

"The teeming autumn, big with rich increase."

II. i. 113. *Wonted.* Accustomed.

II. i. 114. *Increase.* The products natural to each season.

II. i. 117. *Original.* Source.

II. i. 121. *Henchman.* Here, page.

II. i. 146. *Thou shalt not from this grove.* For omission of verb of motion see Introd., p. 43, 4, c.

II. i. 158. *By.* Practically equivalent to "in." Cf. Gr. 145.

II. i. 164. *Fancy-free.* Untouched by love.

II. i. 168. *Love-in-idleness.* A name sometimes applied to the pansy.

II. i. 148-169. These lines constitute one of the most discussed passages in Shakspere, owing to the fact that the dramatist has been suspected of allegorical intent. It has been universally agreed from the time of Shakspere's first editor, Rowe, that the poet here pays a courtly compliment to the Queen. "The fair vestal throned by the west" is undoubtedly Elizabeth, queen of England, an island of the west. Cupid's unsuccessful attempt on the heart of the imperial votaress is, of course, an allusion to the Queen's unmarried condition and oft-proclaimed regard for chastity. Warburton tried to show that by the mermaid was figured Mary, Queen of Scots. The most elaborate theorizing, however, was done by the Rev. N. J. Halpin (*Oberon's Vision.* Shaks. Soc. Publ. 1843), who argued that the passage is to a certain extent descriptive of the entertainment given by the Earl of Leicester for the Queen at Kenilworth Castle in 1575, that Cupid was Leicester, and the little Western flower was Lettice, Countess of Essex, with whom Leicester was then intriguing and whom he afterward married. Halpin's view has failed of general acceptance, for it seems clear that the little western flower is a real flower, and that the passage was written mainly to emphasize its importance and to prepare for the prominent part it plays. For a full discussion of the arguments pro and con see Var. For the bearing of the allusion to Elizabeth on the occasion of the play, see Introd., p. 38.

II. i. 176. *Forty.* Generally used in Shakspere's time to indicate an indefinite number; cf. our expression "forty winks."

II. i. 186. *I am invisible.* Oberon adds this for the benefit of the audience to explain why he remains unnoticed by the mortals. Hens-

lowe, in his diary, lists among his properties "a robe for to go invisibell," and perhaps Oberon wore some such distinctive attire to indicate his invisibility.

II. i. 190. *Stay . . . stayeth.* "I will arrest Lysander, and disappoint his scheme of carrying off Hermia; for 'tis upon the account of this latter that I am wasting away the night in this wood." [Heath, quot. by Var.] Some editors read "slay . . . slayeth."

II. i. 192. *Wood within this wood.* The first word of the pun is the Anglo-Saxon "wod," meaning mad, or furiously angry.

II. i. 195. *Adamant.* Used with some confusion both for the diamond, or other substance of extreme hardness, and for the lodestone or magnet.

II. i. 196. *But yet . . . as steel.* Many editors emend *for* to *though.* Furness explains by making *draw not* = repel. Perhaps the passage may be paraphrased thus: "Yet you draw not iron, for my heart has only the trueness of steel, not its hardness."

II. i. 201. *Nor I cannot.* For double negative see Introd., p. 43, 5, a.

II. i. 208. *Worser.* For double comparative see Introd., p. 42, 3, a.

II. i. 214. *Impeach.* Expose to reproach.

II. i. 220. *Privilege.* Protection. *For that.* Since, because.

II. i. 224. *Respect.* Opinion, estimation.

II. i. 231. The story of Apollo's pursuit of Daphne and her transformation into a laurel tree is told by Ovid in the first book of the *Metamorphoses.*

II. i. 232. *Griffin.* A fabulous animal with the body of a lion and head of an eagle. *Hind.* Female deer.

II. i. 240. *Your wrongs.* The wrongs you do me.

II. i. 244. See Introd., p. 43, 4, f., for grammatical construction.

II. i. 250. *Oxlips.* A kind of cowslips.

II. i. 251. *Woodbine.* Usually, honeysuckle, but used of other climbing shrubs.

II. i. 252. *Eglantine.* Sweet-briar.

II. i. 255. *Throws.* Casts off.

II. i. 256. *Weed.* Garment. Cf. "widow's weeds."

II. ii. With the dropping of the juice in the eyes of Titania and Lysander and the startlingly sudden abandonment by the latter of Hermia for Helena, the complication is fairly under way. The spectacular element prevails in the first part of the scene.

II. ii. 1. *Roundel.* The same as *round,* II. i. 140.

II. ii. 2. *Third part of a minute.* Note the ingenious way in which Shakspere calls attention to the diminutiveness of the fairies by proportioning their conceptions of time to their size.

II. ii. 3. *Cankers.* Canker-worms.

II. ii. 4. *Rere-mice.* Bats.

II. ii. 7. *Quaint.* Fine, dainty.

II. ii. 8. *Offices.* Duties.

II. ii. 9. *Double.* Forked.

II. ii. 11. *Newts and blind-worms.* These harmless creatures were formerly considered poisonous.

II. ii. 13. *Philomel.* The nightingale; the story of Philomela is told in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, bk. vi.

II. ii. 30. *Ounce.* A kind of panther. *Cat.* Wild-cat.

II. ii. 31. *Pard.* Leopard.

II. ii. 36. *Troth.* Truth; in ll. 42 and 50 below it means pledge of love.

II. ii. 45. *Take the sense . . . of my innocence.* "Understand my innocent meaning." [Johnson.]

II. ii. 46. *Love . . . conference.* When lovers talk together their love enables each to get the other's true meaning.

II. ii. 54. *Beshrew.* A playful curse.

II. ii. 68. *Approve.* Prove, test.

II. ii. 79. *Owe.* Own, possess.

II. ii. 86. *Darkling.* In the dark. Cf. *King Lear*, I. iv. 237: "So out went the candle, and we were left darkling."

II. ii. 88. *Fond.* Foolish.

II. ii. 89. *Lesser.* Cf. *worser*, II. i. 208.

II. ii. 99. *Sphery.* Star-like. For *eyne*, cf. I. i. 242, note.

II. ii. 103. The surprising suddenness of Lysander's declaration of love for Helena is accentuated by the rhyme, the way in which he caps the couplet begun by her.

II. ii. 118. *Ripe.* A verb.

II. ii. 119. *Touching . . . skill.* Reaching the highest point of human discernment.

II. ii. 121. *O'erlook.* Look over, peruse.

II. ii. 132. *Gentleness.* Nobility, courtesy.

II. ii. 149. *Eat.* A past tense, a parallel form with *ate.*

II. ii. 154. *Of all loves.* For love's sake; the *of* of adjuration.

ACT III.

III. i. The last scene of Act II. brought the fairies into contact with the group of lovers; here, with the transformation of Bottom and the affection lavished on him by the enamoured queen, the fairies are entangled with the group of artisans. The contrast between asinine Bottom and delicate Titania is in the most exquisite spirit of comedy.

III. i. 2. *Pat, pat.* Exactly, at the time and place agreed upon.

III. i. 4. *Tiring-house.* Dressing room, at-tiring room.

III. i. 8. *Bully.* "A term of endearment and familiarity, originally applied to either sex; sweetheart, darling. Later, to men only, imply-

ing friendly admiration; good friend, fine fellow, 'gallant.'" [New Eng. Dict.] Cf. *Henry V.*, IV. i. 48, "I love the lovely bully"; *Merry Wives*, II. iii. 18, "bully doctor."

III. i. 13. *By'r lakin.* By our lady-kin, or little lady; like "marry," an oath by the Virgin. *Parlous.* A corruption of "perilous," often used merely as an intensive.

III. i. 20. *More better.* For the double comparative, cf. Introd., p. 42, 3, a.

III. i. 24. *In eight and six.* *I. e.* in lines of eight and six syllables alternately.

III. i. 32. *Your.* Not used possessively, but in a colloquial way like the Latin *iste;* that lion you know about. Cf. I. ii. 90, "your straw-colour beard, etc."

III. i. 42. *Pity of my life.* A sad thing for me.

III. i. 45. *Tell them plainly.* Malone suggested that a hint for this might have come from one of the anecdotes in a collection of jests (*Mss. Harl.* 6395): "There was a spectacle presented to Queen Elizabeth on the water, and among others, Harry Goldingham was to represent Arion upon the dolphin's back; but finding his voice to be very hoarse and unpleasant, when he came to perform it, he tears off his disguise and swears he was none of Arion, not he, but e'en honest Harry Goldingham, which blunt discovery pleased the Queen better than if it had gone through in the right way; yet he could order his voice to an instrument exceedingly well." Cf. Scott's use of this incident in *Kenilworth.*

III. i. 56. *Great chamber window, where we play.* *I. e.* the window of the great hall of Theseus's palace. It was a very common thing for the theatrical companies of Shakspere's time to give performances in the homes of noblemen, using the great main hall for the purpose.

III. i. 58. *Bush of thorns.* "The man in the moon was popularly represented with a bundle of thorns and a dog. He was variously explained as being either Isaac carrying the wood for his own sacrifice, or Cain sacrificing thorns as the produce of his land, or the man in *Numbers*, xv. 32, who was stoned for gathering sticks on the Sabbath-day." [C.]

III. i. 79. *Toward.* Preparing.

III. i. 94. *Brisky juvenal.* Brisk youth; the affected vocabulary of the old plays is effectively burlesqued in this bit of the proposed play as rehearsed, which, it will be noted, differs from that finally presented. *Eke.* Also.

III. i. 102. *If I were.* *I. e.* if I were as true as truest horse.

III. i. 105. *Lead you about a round.* Cf. our expression, "to lead one a dance."

III. i. 110. Each of the substantives refers back to the verb in the corresponding position in the preceding line.

III. i. 115. *An ass-head of your own.* "Do you see a reflection of

your own noddle?" [B.] Bottom is here, as later, perfectly unconscious of his transformation; hence, his constant use of the word "ass" has high comic irony.

III. i. 118. *Translated.* Cf. I. i. 191.

III. i. 124. *Ousel cock.* Male blackbird.

III. i. 126. *Throstle.* Thrush.

III. i. 127. *Quill.* Singing voice.

III. i. 130. *Plain-song.* The simple melody in any musical composition, without variations. The word here probably refers to the rather monotonous note of the cuckoo.

III. i. 131-2. The name of the bird suggested cuckold, the word applied by the Elizabethans to a man whose wife was unfaithful, and the bird's note was supposed to convey a warning. Cf. *Love's Labour's Lost,* V. ii. 908 ff:

"The cuckoo then on every tree
Mocks married men; for thus sings he,
'Cuckoo;
Cuckoo, cuckoo,'—O word of fear
Unpleasing to a married ear!"

III. i. 139. *Force perforce.* A strong way of saying "necessarily."

III. i. 145. *Gleek.* Scoff.

III. i. 151. *Whether.* Monosyllabic. Cf. Introd., p. 39, 2.

III. i. 164. *Apricocks.* An earlier and more correct spelling.

III. i. 168. *Eyes.* By poetic license the phosphorescent glow is transferred from the insect's tail to its eyes.

III. i. 169. *Have.* Attend.

III. i. 177. *Cry your mercy.* Beg your pardon.

III. i. 181. *If . . . you.* Cobweb was often used to stop the flow of blood from an injury.

III. i. 184. *Squash.* An unripe peascod.

III. i. 191. *Ox-beef.* Alluding to the use of mustard with beef.

III. i. 197. *Watery eye.* Dew was supposed to fall from the moon.

III. i. 199. *Enforced.* Violated.

III. ii. This scene sees the complications in the story of the lovers at their height, while with the squeezing of the juice into Lysander's eyes comes the first step in the solution. It is to be noted that there is but little distinctive characterization of the lovers; Helena and Hermia, Demetrius and Lysander are almost identical.

III. ii. 3. *In extremity.* Excessively.

III. ii. 5. *Night-rule.* Sometimes glossed as "night-revel," but apparently meaning no more than conduct, order of things, during the night.

III. ii. 7. *Close.* Secret.

III. ii. 9. *Patches.* Clowns, rustics. *Mechanicals.* Mechanics, artisans.

III. ii. 10. *Stalls.* Open shops, like those in a public market.

III. ii. 13. *Barren sort.* Witless crew.

III. ii. 17. *Nole.* Noddle, head.

III. ii. 18. *Anon.* Immediately.

III. ii. 21. *Russet-pated choughs.* Grey-headed jackdaws. *Sort.* Company.

III. ii. 36. *Latch'd.* Caught, ensnared, charmed.

III. ii. 44. *Breath.* Speech.

III. ii. 48. Cf. *Macbeth,* III. iv. 136:

"I am in blood
Stepp'd in so far that, should I wade no more,
Returning were as tedious as go o'er."

III. ii. 55. *Her brother's.* Apollo, the sun god, and Diana, the moon goddess, were brother and sister.

III. ii. 70. *Touch.* Feat.

III. ii. 74. *On a mispris'd mood.* In mistaken temper.

III. ii. 84-87. Sleep is in debt to sorrow, for it is in duty bound to come and give sorrow relief. But sleep is bankrupt, and its failure to relieve sorrow makes sorrow's burden heavier. However, if I wait a bit for sleep to make an offer, it may pay some portion of the debt.

III. ii. 90. *Misprision.* Mistake.

III. ii. 92. *Holding troth.* Keeping faith.

III. ii. 93. *Confounding.* Breaking.

III. ii. 96. *Fancy-sick.* Love-sick. Cf. I. i. 155.

III. ii. 97. *With sighs . . . dear.* It was an old superstition that for every sigh a drop of blood was lost.

III. ii. 99. *Against.* In anticipation of the time when she will appear.

III. ii. 103. *Hit . . . archery.* Cf. II. i. 165 ff.

III. ii. 113. *Fee.* Reward, privilege.

III. ii. 114. *Fond pageant.* Silly spectacle.

III. ii. 119. *Alone.* Unequalled.

III. ii. 124. *So born.* Being so born; an absolute construction, for which see Gr. 376, 377, 417. For alternate rhyme, cf. Introd., p. 38.

III. ii. 128. *Advance.* Show.

III. ii. 133. *Tales.* Empty stories.

III. ii. 153. *Superpraise my parts.* Overpraise my qualities.

III. ii. 157. *Trim.* Fine.

III. ii. 159. *Sort.* Quality, kind.

III. ii. 175. *Aby.* Pay for.

III. ii. 188. *Oes and eyes.* A punning allusion to the stars.

III. ii. 203. *Artificial gods.* Artist-gods.

III. ii. 213. *Two of the first.* A term of heraldry, explained by Douce as referring to "the double coats in heraldry that belong to man and wife as one person, but which have but one crest."

III. ii. 214. *Due.* Belonging.

III. ii. 237. *Persever.* The regular Shaksperian spelling and accent.

III. ii. 242. *Argument.* Subject for sport.

III. ii. 257. *Ethiope.* Alluding, like *tawny Tartar* in l. 263, to Hermia's brunette complexion. The reply of Demetrius, which, owing to differences in reading between the Folio and Quartos, has given rise to much discussion, is practically equivalent to a charge of cowardice on Lysander's part. He implies that Lysander's delay in answering his challenge, really occasioned by the way in which Hermia is clinging to Lysander, is assumed as an excuse for not fighting.

III. ii. 259. *Tame.* Cowardly.

III. ii. 268. *Weak bond. I. e.* Hermia's arms. There is, of course, a pun on the two senses of *bond.*

III. ii. 282. *Canker-blossom.* Usually a wild rose, but here a canker-worm that eats blossoms.

III. ii. 288. *Puppet.* Doll.

III. ii. 296. *Painted maypole.* Maypoles, in addition to being adorned with streamers and flowers, were sometimes painted. *Painted* probably refers to Helena's blonde complexion.

III. ii. 300. *Curst.* Shrewish, spiteful.

III. ii. 302. *Right.* True. *For.* As regards.

III. ii. 310. *Stealth.* Stealthy flight.

III. ii. 317. *Fond.* Foolish.

III. ii. 323. *Shrewd.* Same as *curst,* l. 300.

III. ii. 329. *Minimus.* The Latin superlative, substituted for the English "minim." *Knot-grass.* A weed which was popularly supposed to stunt the growth of children.

III. ii. 335. *Aby.* Cf. l. 175.

III. ii. 338. *Jowl.* Jaw. *Cheek by jowl.* Close alongside.

III. ii. 339. *Coil.* Strife. *'Long of you.* On your account.

III. ii. 345. *Still.* Always.

III. ii. 356. *Welkin.* Heavens.

III. ii. 357. *Acheron.* A river in hell.

III. ii. 367. *Virtuous property.* Powerful and efficacious quality.

III. ii. 368. *His.* See Introd., p. 42, 2, a.

III. ii. 371. *Fruitless.* Without results, consequences.

III. ii. 373. *Date.* Duration.

III. ii. 380. *Aurora's harbinger.* The morning-star, which announces the approach of dawn. A harbinger was a person who rode in advance to procure lodgings.

III. ii. 383. *Crossways and floods.* "Suicides, whose bodies were either never recovered from the water, or else buried in crossways without religious rites, were looked upon as especially doomed to wander." [A.]

III. ii. 389. *Morning's love.* This is probably Aurora herself. but

is sometimes taken as referring to her husband Tithonus or her lover Cephalus.

III. ii. 402. *Drawn.* With drawn sword.

III. ii. 412. *We'll try no manhood here.* We will not make trial of our courage, *i. e.* fight, here.

III. ii. 421. *Ho, ho, ho!* The devil in the old miracle and morality plays usually came on the stage with this laugh, and it was used by Robin Goodfellow in the anecdotes and ballads that described his pranks.

III. ii. 461. *Jack shall have Jill.* In John Heywood's Epigrams, 1567, is found "All shall be well, Jack shall have Jill," and the two names were frequently used generically.

III. ii. 463. *The man . . . well.* Another old proverb.

ACT IV.

IV. i. Two of the three groups of actors, the lovers and the fairies, are here freed from the difficulties in which they have been entangled. The opening situation between Titania and Bottom is a continuation of that in III. i. With l. 107 the scene reverts to III. ii.

IV. i. 2. *Amiable.* Lovely. *Coy.* Caress.

IV. i. 16. *Overflown.* Overflowed, drenched.

IV. i. 19. *Neaf.* Fist.

IV. i. 20. *Leave your courtesy.* Don't bother about ceremony.

IV. i. 22. *Cavalery Cobweb.* Bottom's pronunciation of *Cavalero.* Cobweb has already been assigned another task, and the name ought properly to be Peaseblossom. Either it is a slip on Shakspere's part, or else Bottom is temporarily confused as to his attendant's names.

IV. i. 29. *The tongs and the bones.* The former were struck by an iron key, giving an effect like that of the modern triangle; the latter resembled those used by present day negro minstrels.

IV. i. 33. *Bottle.* "The diminutive of the French *botte,* a bundle, of hay, flax, etc." [C.]

IV. i. 35. *Hoard* is dissyllabic. Cf. Introd., p. 41.

IV. i. 38. *Exposition. I. e.* disposition.

IV. i. 41. *Woodbine . . . honeysuckle.* A good deal of difficulty has been caused by the fact that these two words, here apparently used to distinguish two different plants, are elsewhere used by Shakspere as synonymous. Probably in this instance, however, "woodbine" may be taken as = convolvulus. Cf. II. i. 251.

IV. i. 42. *Female.* Because the ivy is dependent upon the elm as a wife on her husband.

IV. i. 46. *Dotage.* Doting affection.

IV. i. 48. *Favours.* Love-tokens, presents.

IV. i. 53. *Orient.* Bright, rich.

IV. i. 65. *Other.* A plural.

IV. i. 72. *Dian's bud.* The herb of II. i. 184 and III. ii. 366; as *Cupid's flower* is the "love-in-idleness" of II. i. 168.

IV. i. 82. S. D. *Music, still.* Soft music.

IV. i. 94. *Sad.* Grave, cf. II. i. 51.

IV. i. 103. *Observation.* Ceremony, "observance to a morn of May," I. i. 167.

IV. i. 104. *Vaward.* First part; literally, the vanguard of an army.

IV. i. 106. *Uncouple.* Unleash; hounds were leashed in couples.

IV. i. 113. *Hounds of Sparta.* Celebrated for their swiftness and keenness of scent.

IV. i. 114. *Chiding.* Any loud sound; here specifically, baying.

IV. i. 124. *Flew'd.* With large hanging chaps. *Sanded.* Sandy in color.

IV. i. 123. *Each under each.* Of different notes, like bells in a chime. Very great care was paid in Elizabethan times to the musical quality of a pack's cry. Cf. Addison's description of Sir Roger's pack in the *De Coverley Papers.*

IV. i. 133. *Grace.* Honor.

IV. i. 138. *Saint Valentine.* It was supposed that birds began to mate on this day.

IV. i. 144. *To.* As to.

IV. i. 152. Lysander is interrupted by Egeus before finishing what he was saying.

IV. i. 159. *Stealth.* Cf. III. ii. 310, note.

IV. i. 162. *Fancy.* Cf. I. i. 155.

IV. i. 166. *Gaud.* Cf. I. i. 33.

IV. i. 168. *Virtue.* Power.

IV. i. 190. *Like a jewel.* The usual interpretation is that Helena compares her recovery of Demetrius to a person's finding a jewel and remaining in uncertainty whether it is to be a permanent possession or whether it will be claimed by the owner.

IV. i. 199. Bottom's train of thought is taken up precisely where it left off at III. i. 86, when he made his exit as Pyramus before returning with the ass's head upon his shoulders, but he thinks that he has been napping and indulging in most remarkable dreams.

IV. i. 202. *God's my life.* "Shortened form of the oath, 'By God who is my life,' or, 'As God is my life.' " [B.]

IV. i. 205. *Go about.* Undertake.

IV. i. 208. *Patch'd.* The Elizabethan fool or jester was dressed in motley garments, made up of patches of various colors.

IV. i. 209-13. *The eye . . . dream was.* Doubtless a parody of *I. Corinthians,* ii. 9: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

IV. i. 217. *Gracious.* Acceptable. *At her death.* The pronoun seems to refer to Thisbe. By many editors the passage is emended to read "after death," *i. e.* after Bottom's death as Pyramus, he will come to life again to sing the ballad of his dream.

IV. ii. With the reunion of Bottom and the other artisans and their assurance that they are to present their play, the last group of characters are freed from their difficulties, and the plot is practically finished.

IV. ii. 4. *Transported.* Transformed. Starveling's equivalent for the *translated* of Quince, III. i. 118, and of Puck, III. ii. 32.

IV. ii. 6. *Goes not forward.* Will not proceed.

IV. ii. 8. *Discharge.* Act.

IV. ii. 14. *A thing of naught.* A loose woman.

IV. ii. 20. *Sixpence a day.* Thomas Preston had the good fortune to please Queen Elizabeth by his acting in a play in 1564, and was given a pension of twenty pounds a year, at the rate of rather more than a shilling per day.

IV. ii. 27. *Courageous.* Used with no particular meaning, but simply for the effect of its length.

IV. ii. 33. *Of.* From.

IV. ii. 35. *Strings.* With which to tie on the false beards.

IV. ii. 38. *Preferr'd.* Proffered, offered for approval. It has been admitted to the list of entertainments from which Theseus is to choose.

ACT V.

V. i. The real story of the play is now over, and the last act merely provides a comic ending, somewhat in the nature of an epilogue, and closes with the epithalamium, or marriage song, which probably had additional point from the occasion of the play. Cf. Introd., p. 38.

V. i. 5. *Shaping fantasies.* Creative imaginations.

V. i. 8. *Compact.* Composed.

V. i. 11. *Brow of Egypt.* *I. e.* a swarthy complexion.

V. i. 19-20. *That, if . . . joy.* That if it merely conceives the idea of some pleasurable object, it immediately conceives some method of attaining that object.

V. i. 21. *Fear.* Fearful object.

V. i. 26. *Constancy.* Consistency.

V. i. 34. *After-supper.* Sometimes called "rere-supper;" there is difference of opinion whether it means a second supper, served some

time later than the regular meal, or merely the dessert or last course of a supper. Here the latter meaning would seem preferable.

V. i. 35. *Manager of mirth.* All court entertainments were in charge of a Master of the Revels, who was a personage of considerable importance.

V. i. 39. *Abridgement.* Something to make time seem shorter, a pastime.

V. i. 42. *Brief.* List. *Ripe.* Ready.

V. i. 44. *Battle with the Centaurs.* Between the Centaurs and Lapithae. Cf. Ovid, *Met.* XII.

V. i. 49. *Thracian singer.* Orpheus. Cf. Ovid, *Met.* XI.

V. i. 52. *The thrice three Muses.* The attempts to find an allusion here to some recently deceased poet are not convincing, nor does any topical reference seem to be necessarily implied.

V. i. 55. *Sorting.* Agreeing, fitting.

V. i. 59. *Wondrous.* For pronunciation, cf. Introd., p. 40, 2. *Strange.* Unnatural, prodigious.

V. i. 74. *Unbreathed.* Unpractised.

V. i. 79-81. *Unless you . . . service.* "Unless you can find entertainment in their endeavors, which they have stretched to the utmost in studying with cruel pain the lines of the play, for the purpose of serving you." [B.]

V. i. 85. *O'ercharged.* Overladen.

V. i. 86. *His.* See Introd., p. 42, 2, a.

V. i. 88. *In this kind.* At this sort of business, *i. e.* acting.

V. i. 90. *To take what they mistake.* To accept in good part what they offer blunderingly.

V. i. 91-2. *Noble respect takes it in might, not merit.* True nobility or courtesy, looking on, takes the will for the deed; "accommodates its judgment to the abilities of the performers, not to the merit of the performance." [S.]

V. i. 93. *Clerks.* Scholars, men of learning.

V. i. 96. *Make periods.* Come to a stop.

V. i. 101. *Fearful.* Awe-struck, timorous.

V. i. 105. *To my capacity.* In my opinion.

V. i. 106. *Address'd.* Ready.

V. i. 107. *Flourish of trumpets.* The usual announcement that the play was to begin.

V. i. 108 ff. The mispunctuation, indicating that Quince's faulty elocution leads him into saying the exact opposite of what his lines intend, is very carefully observed in both Quartos and Folios. The same comic device is used in Nicholas Udall's comedy of *Ralph Roister Doister*, played about the middle of the sixteenth century.

V. i. 113. *Minding.* Intend ng.

V. i. 118. *Stand upon.* Observe. *Points* Punningly used, mean-

ing either (1) the proprieties of speech, or (2) the marks of punctuation.

V. i. 120. *Knows not the stop.* A pun of a similar nature, since *stop* may be taken as a term in horsemanship, indicating a particularly sudden method of bringing a horse to a stop.

V. i. 123. *Recorder.* A kind of flute or flageolet. *In government.* Under control.

V. i. 126. *Gentles.* Gentlefolk, ladies and gentlemen; a common form of address.

V. i. 129. *Certain.* The throwing of the accent on the second syllable produces the burlesque effect that is apparent through all the diction, rhyming, and pronunciation of the performance by Bottom's company.

V. i. 138. *Hight.* Is called.

V. i. 141. *Fall.* Used transitively.

V. i. 143. *Tall.* Valiant.

V. i. 146. *Broach'd.* Pierced. "Apt alliteration's artful aid" has been much employed in English poetry from Anglo-Saxon times down, but it is the excessive use of it in old dramas like *Sir Clyomon and Sir Clamydes* that Shakspere here parodies.

V. i. 162. *Sinister.* Left.

V. i. 169. *Grim-look'd.* Grim-looking.

V. i. 181. *Sensible.* Possessing senses.

V. i. 194. *Lover's grace.* Graceful lover.

V. i. 195. *Limander.* Bottom's version of Leander, as *Helen* in the following line, is Flute's error for Hero.

V. i. 197. *Shafalus* and *Procrus.* Cephalus and Procris, whose story is told by Ovid, *Met.* VII.

V. i. 202. *'Tide life, 'tide death.* Whatever may betide.

V. i. 205. *Moon used.* This is the reading of the Quartos. The Folios read "Morall down," which Theobald emended to "mure [= wall] all down," and Pope to "mural down." The folio reading on which these later conjectures are based seems like an unauthorized attempt to make this speech fit with the next. The quarto reading is possible, and, on the whole, gives as good sense as any of the emendations.

V. i. 222. *A lion,* etc. I am a lion's skin, and in no other sense can be said to contain a lion.

V. i. 223. *Pity on my life.* Cf. III. i. 43.

V. i. 231 ff. The kind of verbal fencing illustrated by the speeches of Demetrius and Theseus, which seems very flat to us, greatly tickled the fancy of the Elizabethans, and proficiency in it was part of the equipment of a courtier. Cf. the scene between the French lords in *Henry V.*, III. vii.

V. i. 243. *Greatest error of all the ...* Abbott (Gr. 409) calls this a confusion of two constructions, viz.: the greatest error of all, and a

greater error than all the rest. Abbott quotes Milton's lines in *Paradise Lost*, iv. 323-4:

> "Adam the goodliest of men since born
> His sons; the fairest of her daughters Eve."

V. i. 247. *In snuff*. A common pun on two meanings of snuff as (1) the burnt out part of a wick, (2) anger. Cf. *Love's Labour's Lost*, V. ii. 22: "You'll mar the light by taking it in snuff."

V. i. 267. *Mous'd*. Thisbe's mantle is shaken and torn by the lion, as is a mouse by a cat.

V. i. 276. *Dole*. Grief.

V. i. 284. *Thread and thrum*. In weaving *the thread* runs lengthwise of the loom to make the warp, while the tufts at the end of the warp where it is tied, are called *thrums*.

V. i. 285. *Quail*. Seems to have no particular meaning, but to be used for its alliterative effect. *Quell*. Kill.

V. i. 286. *Passion*. Violent sorrow.

V. i. 296. *Pap*. In the pronunciation of Shakspere's time this probably rhymed with *hop*.

V. i. 305. *No die, but an ace, for him*. The ace is the single spot on a die, in any game where dice are used. The punning on *ace* is continued by Theseus in *ass*, l. 310.

V. i. 317. *Which Pyramus, which Thisbe*. *I. e.* whether Pyramus or Thisbe is the better.

V. i. 318-19. *He for a man . . . bless us*. Omitted from the Folios, probably because of the statute of James I., passed in 1605, against using the name of God on the stage.

V. i. 322. *Videlicet*. As follows.

V. i. 335. *Sisters Three*. The Fates.

V. i. 339. *Shore*. A burlesque rhyming form of shorn.

V. i. 343. *Imbrue*. Stain with blood.

V. i. 352. *Bergomask*. A rustic dance after the manner of the people of Bergamo in northern Italy, who were considered especially clownish.

V. i. 354. *Your play needs no excuse*. The epilogue of a play usually begged the indulgence of the audience; cf. Puck's concluding lines.

V. i. 359. *Discharg'd*. Performed. Cf. IV. ii. 8.

V. i. 361. *Told*. Counted, numbered.

V. i. 364. *Overwatch'd*. Stayed up too late.

V. i. 365. *Palpable-gross*. Palpably or evidently gross, stupid.

V. i. 366. *Heavy gait of night*. Cf. *Henry V.*, IV. Prol. 20: "the cripple tardy-gaited night."

V. i. 372. *Fordone*. Exhausted. The prefix for—, like the German ver—, implies negation or injury.

V. i. 382. *Triple Hecate*. Statues of Hecate usually had three bodies and three heads, because of the three realms in which she was a divinity. In heaven she was called Cynthia or Luna, on earth Diana,

in hell Hecate or Proserpina. *Triple* is equivalent to the Latin *triformis* or *tergemina*, epithets applied to the goddess by Horace and Virgil.

V. i. 410. *Prodigious.* Monstrous.

V. i. 413. *Consecrate.* Consecrated.

V. i. 414. *Gait.* Way.

V. i. 430. *Unearned luck.* Undeserved good fortune.

V. i. 431. *Serpent's tongue.* The hiss of disapproval.

V. i. 435. *Hands.* Applause.

V. i. 436. *Restore amends.* "Return your favors." [B.]

WORD INDEX

Abridgement, V. i. 39.
aby, III. ii. 175; III. ii. 335.
ace, V i. 305
Acheron, III. ii. 357.
adamant, II. i. 195.
address'd, V. i. 106.
advance, III. ii. 128.
after-supper, V. i. 34.
against, I. i. 125.; III. ii. 99.
aggravate, I. ii. 80.
alone, III. ii. 119.
amiable, IV. i. 2.
an, I. ii. 51; I. ii. 82.
anon, III. ii. 18.
approve, II. ii. 68.
apricocks, III. i. 164.
argument, III. ii. 242.
artificial, III. ii. 203.
aunt, II. i. 51.

Barm, II. i. 38.
barren, III. ii. 13.
bated, I. i. 190.
belike, I. i. 130.
bergomask, V. i. 352.
beshrew, II. ii. 54.
beteem, I. i. 131.
blood, I. i. 68; I. i. 135.
bones, IV. i. 29.
bottle, IV. i. 33.
breath, III. ii. 44.
brief, V. i. 42.
broach'd, V. i. 146.
brow of Egypt, V. i. 11.
bully, III. i. 8.
buskin'd, II. i. 71.

Canker-blossom, III. ii. 282.
cankers, II. ii. 3.
capacity, V. i. 105.
Cavalery, IV. i. 22.
changeling, II. i. 23.
chiding, IV. i. 114.
childing, II. i. 112.
choughs, III. ii. 21.
clerks, V. i. 93.
close, III. ii. 7.
coil, III. ii. 339.
collied, I. i. 145.
compact, V. i. 8.
companies, I. i. 219.
companion, I. i. 15.
conceits, I. i. 33.
condole, I. ii. 27.
confounding, III. ii. 93.
consecrate, V. i. 413.
constancy, V. i. 26.
contagious, II. i. 90.
continents, II. i. 92.
courageous, IV. ii. 27.
courtesy, IV. i. 20.
coy, IV. i. 2.
crab, II. i. 48.
crazed, I. i. 92.
cry your mercy, III. i. 177.
curst, III. ii. 300.

Darkling, II. ii. 86.
date, III. ii. 373.
deriv'd, I. i. 99.
discharge, IV. ii. 8.
discharg'd, V. i. 359.
distemperature, II. i. 106.

dole, V. i 276.
dotage, IV. i. 46.
double, II. ii. 9.
dowager, I. i. 5.
drawn, III. ii. 402.
due, I. i. 154; III. ii. 214.

Eat, II. ii. 149.
eglantine, II. i. 252.
enforced, III. i. 199.
Ercles, I. ii. 29.
estate unto, I. i. 98.
Ethiope, III. ii. 257.
exposition, IV. i. 38.
extenuate, I. i. 120.
eyne, I. i. 242; II. ii. 99.

Faining, I. i. 31.
faint, I. i. 215.
fair, I. i. 182.
fall, V. i. 141.
fancy, I i. 118; I. i. 155; IV. i 162.
fancy-free, II. i 164.
fancy-sick. III. ii. 96.
fantasies, V. i. 5.
favour, I. i. 186.
favours, IV. i 48.
fear, V. i. 21.
fearful, V. i. 101.
fee, III. ii. 113.
filch'd, I. i. 36.
flew'd, IV. i. 119.
fond, II. ii. 88; III. ii. 114; III. ii. 317.
force perforce, III. i. 139.
fordone, V. i. 372.
fruitless, III. ii. 371.

Gait, V. i. 414.
gallant, I. ii. 23.
gawds, I. i. 33.
gaud, IV. i. 166.
gentleness, II. ii. 132.
gentles, V. i. 126.
glance at, II. i. 75.
gleek, III. i. 145.
go about, IV. i. 205.
God's my life, IV. i. 202.
grace, IV. i. 133.
gracious, IV. i 217.
griffin, II. i. 232.
grim-look'd, V. i. 169.
grow to a point, I. ii. 10.

Hands, V. i. 435.
harbinger, III. ii. 380.
have, III. i. 169.
henchman, II. i. 121.
Hiems, II. i. 109.
hight, V. i. 138.
hind, II. i. 232.
his, II. i. 95; III ii. 368; V. i. 86.
humour, I. ii. 28.

Imbrue, V i 343
immediately, I. i. 45.
impeach, II. i. 214
increase, II. i. 114.
interlude, I. ii. 6.

Jowl, III. ii. 338.
juvenal, III. i. 94.

Knot-grass, III. ii. 329.

Lakin, III. i. 13.
latch'd, III. ii 36.
leagues, I. i. 159.
lesser, II. ii. 89.
Limander, V. i. 195.
lingers, I. i. 4.
lob, II. i. 16.
lode-stars, I i. 183.
love-in-idleness, II. i. 168.
lovers' grace, V. i. 194.

Margent, II. i. 85.
marry, I. ii. 11.

mask, I. ii. 49.
mazes, II. i. 99.
mechanicals, III. ii. 9.
mew'd, I. i. 71.
minding, V. i. 113.
minimus, III. ii. 329.
misgraffed, I. i. 137.
mispris'd mood, III. ii. 74.
misprision, III. ii. 90.
momentany, I. i. 143.
moon used, V. i. 205.
more better, III. i. 20.
mous'd, V. i. 267.
murrain, II. i. 97.

Neaf, IV. i. 19.
neeze, II. i. 56.
nine men's morris, II. i. 98.
nole, III. ii. 17.
nor . . . not, II. i. 201.

Obscenely, I. ii. 105.
observation, IV. i. 103.
o'ercharged, V. i. 85.
o'erlooked, II. ii. 121.
oes, III. ii. 188.
of all loves, II. ii. 154.
offices, II. ii. 8.
orbs, II. i. 9.
orient, IV. i. 53.
original, II. i. 117.
other, IV. i. 65.
ounce, II. ii. 30.
ousel cock, III. i. 124.
overflown, IV. i. 16.
overwatch'd, V. i. 364.
owe, II. ii. 79.
oxlips, II. i. 250.

Painted maypole, III. ii. 296.
palpable-gross, V. i. 365.
pard, II. ii. 31.
parlous, III. i. 13.
parts, III. ii. 153.
passion, V. i 286.
pat, III. i. 2.
patch'd, IV. i. 208.
patches, III. ii. 9.
patent, I. i. 80.
paved, II. i. 84.
pensioners, II. i. 10.
periods, V. i. 96.
persever, III. ii. 237.
pert, I. i. 13.
Philomel, II. ii. 13.
pity of my life, III. i. 42; V. i 224.
plain-song, III. i. 130.
points, V. i. 118.
Puck, II. i. 40.
puppet, III. ii. 288.
purple-in-grain, I. ii. 91.
preferr'd, IV. ii. 38.
prevailment, I. i. 35.
privilege, II. i. 220.
Procrus, V. i. 197.
prodigious, V. i. 410.
proper, I. ii. 84.
protest, I. i. 89.

Quail, V. i. 285.
quaint, II. ii. 7.
quantity, I. i. 232.
quell, V. i. 285.
quern, II. i. 36.
quill, III. i. 127.
quire, II. i. 55.

Recorder, V. i. 123.
rere-mice, II. ii. 4.
respect, II. i. 224.
respects, I. i. 160.
restore amends, V. i. 436.
right, III. ii. 302.
ringlets, II. i. 86.
ripe, II. ii. 118; V. i. 42.
roundel, II. ii. 1.

Sad, IV. i. 94.
saddest, II. i. 51.

sanded, IV. i. 119.
scrip, I. ii. 3.
sensible, V. i. 181.
serpent's tongue, V. i. 431.
Shafalus, V. i. 197.
sheen, II. i. 29.
shore, V. i. 339.
shrewd, II. i. 33; III. ii. 323.
simplicity, I. i. 171.
sinister, V. i. 162.
snuff, V. i. 247.
sort, III. ii. 13; III. ii. 21; III. ii. 159.
sorting, V. i. 55.
sphery, II. ii. 99.
spleen, I. i. 146.
spotted, I. i. 110.
square, II. i. 30.
squash, III. i. 184.
stalls, III. ii. 10.
stand upon, V. i. 118.
stealth, III. ii. 310; IV. i. 159.
still, I. i. 212; III. ii. 345.
stop, V. i. 120.
strange, V. i. 59.
super-praise, III. ii. 153.

"Tailor," II. i. 54.
tales, III. ii. 133.
tall, V. i. 143.
tame, III. ii. 259.
thin, II. i. 109.
thing of naught, IV. ii. 14.
throstle, III. i. 126.
throws, II. i. 255.
thrum, V. i. 284.
tiring-house, III. i. 4.
told, V. i. 361.
tongs, IV. i. 29.
touch, III. ii. 70.
toward, III. i. 78.
trace, II. i. 25.
translated, I. i. 191; III. i. 118.
transported, IV. ii. 4.
trim, III. ii. 157.
triple Hecate, V. i. 382.
troth, II. ii. 36; II. ii. 42; III ii. 92.
two of the first, III. ii. 213.

Unbreathed, V. i. 74.
uncouple, IV. i. 106.
unearned luck, V. i. 430.
unhard'ned, I. i. 35.

Vaward, IV. i. 104.
videlicet, V. i. 322.
villagery, II. i. 35.
virtue, IV. i. 168.
virtuous, III. ii. 367.
voice, I. i. 54.

Wanton, II. i. 99.
washes, II. i. 104.
waxen, II. i. 56.
weed, II. i. 256.
welkin, III. ii. 356.
wonted, II. i. 113.
wood, II. i. 192.
woodbine, II. i. 251.
worser, II. i. 208.

You (eth. dat.), I. ii. 81.
you were best, I. ii. 2.
your, III. i. 32.

APPENDIX

(Adapted, and enlarged, from the *Manual for the Study of English Classics,* by George L. Marsh)

HELPS TO STUDY

The Drama

In what did the drama originate? (Pages 16, 17.)

What elements were contained in the miracle plays that had an influence toward the development of comedy?

What were moralities? Interludes?

What foreign influences contributed to the development of the Elizabethan drama (pp. 19, 20)?

Name several of Shakspere's predecessors in the drama. Who was the greatest of them?

Describe briefly the theater of Shakspere's day (pp. 26, 27). The characteristics of a Shaksperean audience. Did Shakspere write his plays for posterity or to please an Elizabethan audience?

Shakspere's Career

When and where was Shakspere born?

What can you say as to his education (p. 21)? His occupations before he went to London?

What do we know about his early years in London?

What were his first dramatic efforts (p. 24)? What other literary work, besides writing plays, did he do?

Learn the general characteristics of Shakspere's work during the four periods into which it is divided, and the names of representative plays of each period (pp. 29, 30).

A Midsummer-Night's Dream—External Facts

What is the probable date of this play (p. 32)? What are the evidences by which this conclusion is reached? What are the early editions of it and when did they appear (p. 34)?

Wherein does this play notably differ from most of Shakspere's works in relation to a source (p. 34)? What English writers before Shakspere may have furnished some hints? What is it important to remember about Shakspere's use of fairy lore (pp. 35-37)?

Are there reasons for thinking this play was not intended for the ordinary stage (pp. 37, 38)?

Test the metrical characteristics of the play by making whatever additions you can to the examples of use of rhyme mentioned on page 38. For what purposes is prose used (p. 39)?

Find additional examples of the various uses of language mentioned on pages 42-44. Of the metrical irregularities (pp. 39-41).

Progress of the Play

What specific act starts the play moving (p. 133)? This may be called the "exciting force." What relation has the preceding matter to the main action?

Note possible indications of Queen Elizabeth's expected presence at the first presentation of this play (pp. 50, 66, 67).

Is it natural that Lysander and Hermia should be left together (p. 51)? Can you suggest a manner of handling the scene—the exits, grouping, and moving of characters, etc.—that will make this seem more natural? What effort is made to account for leaving the two alone?

Note the antithesis and balance in the one-line speeches on pages 52, 54. Are there similar examples elsewhere in the play? What is the effect of such devices?

Is Helena's resolve to tell Demetrius of Hermia's flight reasonable (p. 56)? Or did the dramatist simply have to get his people to the wood, by any hook or crook?

What broadly contrasted groups of human characters in the play are presented in scenes i and ii of Act I? What connections are made between them (p. 136)?

What was an "interlude" (p. 136)? What sort of dramatic productions are burlesqued in I, ii (p. 57)? Note how, in all scenes similar to this, Shakspere reflects the theatric conditions of his time.

How are the fairy characters which are introduced in II, i, given an important relation to the human characters and the main plot of the play (p. 138)?

Note the resemblances of what is said about Robin Goodfellow (pp. 62, 63) to things said about Queen Mab in Mercutio's famous speech in *Romeo and Juliet* (pp. 36, 37).

Is there any good reason within the play for Titania's long speech on pages 64, 65? Does the answer to the foregoing question affect one's judgment as to the use of this speech in trying to determine the date of the play (p. 33)?

What portion of II, i, has been given an allegorical interpretation (p. 141)? Is the undoubted personal allusion of this passage objectionable in a play set in Athens?

Note in detail the skillful way in which Puck's compliance with Oberon's instructions is made to result in the opposite way from that intended (II, ii).

Does Bottom know he is changed (p. 82)? What is the effect (p. 145)? Why is he chosen from among the artisans to receive the ass's head?

What purpose is served by Robin's telling in detail about action that has already been witnessed (pp. 86, 87)?

What first step toward the solution of the complications of the plot is taken in III, ii?

What differences in appearance between Helena and Hermia are brought out in the course of the dialogue (pp. 96, 97, etc.)? Are there any distinct differences of character? How about Demetrius and Lysander in this regard? Do Helena's conclusions as to a conspiracy to mock her (p. 93) seem reasonable? Is the quarrel between her and Hermia worked up naturally? Does it unduly lower their dignity as heroines, or is it in any way objectionable?

Where is the complication of the plot complete?

Is it necessary, and effective, to have Oberon tell what he is going to do (p. 100)—how he will have the various complications unravelled? Does he tell so much as to cause readers or audience to lose interest?

Note the use of stanzaic forms for balanced speeches (pp. 90, 91, 103, etc.). What is the effect?

Why does Oberon himself release Titania from the spell, while Puck releases the other victims? Is the reconciliation of Oberon and Titania made to appear complete and reasonable?

How do Theseus and Hippolyta happen to come to the wood (p. 110)? Why is no trouble made about finding the young people there? Why does Theseus no longer support Hermia's father in his choice of Demetrius for her?

Why is Bottom the last of the bewitched mortals to awake? How is his first speech on awaking to be accounted for (p. 149)?

What striking comic device is used in Quince's Prologue (p. 151)? Work out what is really meant, as contrasted with what he actually says.

Note differences in both meter and language between the fanciful verse of the fairies and the burlesque lyric forms used by the artisan-actors (pp. 127 ff.).

Are the comments of the auditors effectively worked in with the interlude in V, i?

Why should the fairies come in again at the very end? (See p. 150.)

What is the function of the last act in relation to the real plot of the play? Would you wish it cut off?

What significant things about poetry and drama are said during the last act (pp. 116, 124)?

General Considerations

How long does the action last? Note hints as to time throughout the play. Which imply a longer and which a shorter duration? What reasons are there for such "double time"?

Which is the more important in this play—the fairy or the human element? How do the fairies differ from the mortals? Is Puck materially unlike the other fairies? Compare and contrast him with Ariel in *The Tempest.*

Is it in any way objectionable that Shakspere brought together in one play characters from Greek mythology, English folk lore, and the common life of his time?

What line within the play may be said to express its main theme (p. 52)? Is this sufficient? Discuss the point as to the main theme.

Contrast the wholly comic use of a play within a play here, with the tragic use of such a play in *Hamlet.*

What difficulties are there in effective staging of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream?* Let those who have ever seen it played give their impressions.

In what way does this play seem the work of a young man? Contrast *The Tempest,* a similar sort of play written much later in Shakspere's life.

Does the comedy of this play result mainly from character or from situation? Compare *A Comedy of Errors* on this point. Is the individual character of any personage especially significant? Whom do you consider the most important figure in the dramatic portraiture?

THEME SUBJECTS

1. Shakspere's life (pp. 21-31).
2. The drama before Shakspere (pp. 15-21).
3. The stage of Shakspere's time (pp. 26, 27; with illustration of how different parts of this play were presumably staged).
4. Allusions to contemporary persons and events in this play (pp. 33, 38).
5. *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* and possible sources (pp. 34-37).
6. Narrative themes on the different stories involved, e. g.:

Hermia and Lysander.	Oberon and Titania's quarrel.
Helena and Demetrius.	The translation of Bottom.
Theseus and Hippolyta.	

7. The play within the play (its purpose, its story, how it may be assumed to have been staged, etc.).
8. Shakspere and English fairy lore (pp. 35-37).
9. Character sketch of Robin Goodfellow; of Theseus; of Bottom.
10. The quartet of young lovers. (Are they individualized?)
11. The structure of the play. (Note the gradually increasing complications, followed by rapid unravelling, mainly by the fairies.)
12. The satiric element (in the dramatic aspirations of the artisans).
13. Metrical characteristics of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* (pp. 38 ff.).
14. Develop and explain the views about poetry and the drama to be found on pages 116, 124.
15. *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* on the stage. (Is it staged often; difficult or easy to play? Let any who have seen it played write their impressions.)

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